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ABSTRACT

The report summarizes findings of research activities conducted over 2 years by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) on the mother tongue and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) literacy. The first section provides a review of existing literature in native language literacy for adults, including a summary of surveys, review of studies on native language literacy, analysis of rationales that programs give for offering native language literacy, and a description of key articles written by practitioners. The second section presents findings of a 1992 CAL working group on native language literacy, whose participants included teachers and administrators from native language literacy programs in the United States and other researchers and experts in the field. Overviews of activities and promising practices at six sites offering instruction in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Hmong native language literacy are included. The third section identifies key issues that need to be addressed to move the field forward, and makes recommendations for research and policy formation. One key issue is the funding of demonstration projects that can be linked to studies of the relationship between native language literacy and second language acquisition, student retention, and other learner goals. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Adult Native Language Literacy

A Synthesis and Plan for Research and Action

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Marilyn Gillespie
Eugenie Ballering

Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, D.C.

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Adult Native Language Literacy: A Synthesis and Plan for Research and Action

Marilyn Gillespie
Eugenie Ballering

Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, D.C.

Abstract

This report summarizes the findings of research activities conducted over the past two years by the Center for Applied Linguistics with a grant from the National Center on Adult Literacy entitled: Mother Tongue and ESL Literacy: A Synthesis and Plan for Further Research. *The first section of the report provides a review of existing literature in the area of mother-tongue (or native language) literacy for adults. It includes a summary of existing surveys of the field, a review of research studies relevant to native language literacy, an analysis of rationales programs give for offering native language literacy, and a description of key articles written by practitioners. The second section includes the findings of The Working Group Meeting on Native Language Literacy held at the Center for Applied Linguistics in the summer of 1992. Participants included teachers and administrators from native language literacy programs around the United States, as well as researchers and other experts in the field. Overviews of activities and promising practices at six sites offering native language literacy in Spanish, Haitian Kreyol and Hmong are included in this section. The third, and final, section identifies key issues that need to be addressed to move the field of native language literacy forward, and provides recommendations for researchers and policy makers. A key issue identified is the need for funding which specifically targets the development of demonstration projects in native language literacy which can then be linked to studies of the value of native language literacy in promoting second language acquisition, in improving student retention and achieving other learner goals. In order for research to be undertaken, programs need stable funding and collaborations need to be built between researchers and programs. This research should take place in multiple sites using various instructional models and representing different language groups. Finally, learners' activities need to be followed over a period of months and years.*

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Many people contributed to the process that led to this report. As the first Project Director for the Mother Tongue and ESL Literacy Project, sponsored through the National Center on Adult Literacy, JoAnn Crandall, along with David Spener, Associate Director, was responsible for the project's initial conceptualization at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). During this stage, Adriane Vaznaugh, along with David Spener, completed an annotated bibliography that was instrumental to the review of literature found in this report. In the second year of the project, Marilyn Gillespie became Project Director. She was responsible for completing the survey of programs around the United States offering mother tongue literacy instruction. The database continues to be maintained at the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE) by Dr. Gillespie and by Amy Fitch.

As Project Director during Year 2, Marilyn Gillespie was also responsible for planning the Working Group Meeting on Native Language Literacy. In the preparation of this report, she was joined by Literacy Consultant Eugenie Ballering. Ms. Ballering acted as a recorder during the Working Group meeting and later was responsible for coordinating and editing the site reports and compiling the many sections of this report, including those which address the Working Group meeting and the findings. Many others also contributed to the writing of this report. In Section II, descriptions of the activities of coalitions formed in New York City and Chicago were supplied by Dan Rabideau of the Literacy Assistance Center and José Hunter, of Casa Aztlán, respectively. The description and analysis of assessment issues in native language literacy found in Section IV was written by Loren McGrail, Literacy Specialist at World Education. The site reports, found in Appendix 4, were written by representatives from the sites. The representatives include Klaudia Rivera and Deidre Freeman of El Barrio Popular in New York City; Celia Esparza and Carol Clymer Spradling of El Paso Community College in El Paso; José Hunter of Casa Aztlán in Chicago; Lilia Salazar-Holst of Triton College in the Chicago area; Julio Midy and Marilyn St. Hilaire of the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Boston; and Douglas Doua Vue of the Lao Family Center in Milwaukee.

Several individuals from the Working Group also provided significant assistance in reviewing a draft of this report. They include Heide Spruck Wrigley, Elsa Auerbach, Aliza Becker, Loren McGrail, and Dan Rabideau. At CAL, we would like to thank Donna Christian, Allene Grognet, Sharon Snyder, and Margo Pfleger who each acted in an advisory role for the project. Special thanks also go to Fran Keenan and Amy Fitch for completing the report's final editing and to Sonia Kundert for its layout and formatting.

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I. Introduction

The Growing Linguistic Minority Population

The United States has always been a country of both cultural and linguistic diversity. Preliminary results released by the 1990 Census indicate that, far from diminishing, the percentages of the U.S. population that represent linguistic minorities are growing considerably. The 1990 Census recorded 17.3 million home speakers of Spanish. They constituted 54 percent of the total number of persons who report speaking non-English languages at home. This represents a dramatic 56 percent increase over the number of Spanish speakers reported in the 1980 Census. Nearly 2 million people speak French at home, 1.5 million speak German, and 1.3 million each speak Chinese languages or Italian. Polish, Korean, and Vietnamese are each spoken by at least half a million people in the United States. Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese language populations have all more than doubled over the last decade. Many of those who speak languages other than English at home reside in a few key states, including Texas, California, New Mexico, New York, and Arizona (*Numbers and Needs: Ethnic Minorities in the United States*, September, 1992). Between now and the year 2000, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that immigrants will make up 29 percent of new entrants into the labor force, twice their current share. "These workers, concentrated in the South and West, are likely to reshape local economies dramatically" (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Not surprisingly, these increases are also reflected in the adult education population. According to the U.S. Department of Education, English as a Second Language (ESL) is the fastest growing and most multi-dimensional sector of adult education programs. ESL enrollment nearly tripled between 1980 and 1989. It now exceeds one million students. The Department of Education reports that today one in every three students enrolled in adult education participates in ESL instruction, up from one in five in 1980 (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Native Language Literacy as an Instructional Strategy

While in most cases ESL programs focus on teaching students how to communicate in the English language, a frequent barrier to their learning is the lack of literacy in the native language. For example, New York City estimates that 27 percent of its adult ESL students are nonliterate in their native language (U.S. Department of Education, 1991). Educators who work with non-English speakers lacking literacy skills have generally followed one of two basic instructional strategies. By far the most common trend is to teach initial reading and writing simultaneously with teaching speaking and listening skills in English, even for those students who are not literate in their native language. Such a strategy may be necessary in smaller programs where students are taught in mixed language groups and/or where programs lack instructors able to speak the native languages of students. For many students, however, the task of learning the basics of reading and writing in a language which they only partially understand can be dauntingly slow.

Over the past ten or fifteen years, some programs have begun to offer literacy instruction in learners' mother tongues or some combination of mother tongue literacy and ESL instruction. These programs refer to themselves as mother tongue literacy, native language literacy, or basic education in the native language (BENL) programs. Often these terms are used interchangeably. (In this study, we have chosen, for the most part, to refer to "native language literacy" since this seems to be the term most frequently used by U.S.-based programs.) Such programs currently seem to be concentrated in a few key cities and regions. However, reports from the field indicate that the number of programs is increasing. Practitioners offering initial literacy in the native language claim that it makes it easier for students to transfer their literacy skills to English, that it creates better opportunities for adult learners to draw upon existing knowledge and strengths—thus improving their self-esteem and commitment to further education—and that it promotes cultural and linguistic diversity as a basic human right.

Although the trend towards increased awareness of native language is growing, very little data, either from the perspective of research or practice, have been collected systematically. Before beginning this study in 1990, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) was able to find no listing of programs around the country offering this kind of instruction. Information related to the patterns for how native language literacy instruction is articulated with ESL instruction, the reasons why programs chose to offer native language literacy, or the outcomes they perceive to derive from it was very scarce. Nor did CAL find many research studies which addressed the issue of the effectiveness of native language literacy as an educational strategy. Those one or two that did (Robson, 1982; Burtoff, 1985) were limited in scope.

The Center for Applied Linguistics Study

In October 1990, CAL initiated a two-year study entitled "Mother Tongue and ESL Literacy: A Synthesis and Plan for Further Research." The study was one of many adult literacy research projects sponsored through the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania (NCAL). NCAL was established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1990, with federal co-funding by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research on Instruction (OERI), the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services. NCAL represents a broad national initiative to focus research and development on adult literacy. The many studies funded include those addressing topics such as motivational factors in adult literacy participation, skills assessment in adult literacy, workplace literacy, and literacy learning in families.

During the first year of the study, we at CAL carried out three main activities. First, a literature review was undertaken using the ERIC database and other sources. Second, in January 1991 a colloquium on the topic of adult biliteracy was held. Academic researchers working in the area of biliteracy with adults and children presented papers. The collected papers are being published as a book entitled *Biliteracy: Theory and Practice*, edited by David Spener. The book will be available through the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE) in early 1993. A third activity started in Year 1 was a survey of programs in the United States that offer mother tongue literacy instruction or some combination of mother tongue and ESL literacy instruction. We addressed three broad categories of questions related to 1) the general nature of programs offering mother tongue and ESL literacy, 2) patterns of articulation and educational approaches of mother tongue and ESL instructional programs, and 3) the purposes and outcomes of mother tongue instruction. The results of this initial survey of 49 programs from around the country will be described in the next section of this report. (Through links with NCLE, we are continuing to identify additional programs and to add information provided by these programs to an ongoing database of native language literacy programs in the United States.)

Our first year's work helped us to identify programs and individuals around the country who are leaders in native language literacy instruction with adults. As part of our Year 2 activities, we conducted further in-depth phone interviews and, in some cases, site visits, finally selecting six programs from various parts of the country representing key language groups. Representatives from these programs, as well as other specialists, were invited to form a Working Group on Native Language Literacy to help us to further investigate the following questions:

1. What is the nature of current research and practice in the field of native language literacy for adults in the United States?
2. What do programs report to be outcomes of native language literacy instruction?
3. What do programs report as factors that facilitate and/or impede the implementation of effective native language literacy programs?
4. What processes and tools are currently being used to measure the effectiveness of native language literacy instruction? What are their strengths and limitations?

5. What do expert practitioners, administrators, and researchers see as key recommendations for further research, for policy, and for activities needed for program improvement within the field of mother tongue literacy instruction?

On August 28 and 29, 1992, the Working Group on Native Language Literacy convened a two-day meeting at CAL to discuss and reflect upon the above questions.

The contents of this report synthesize and summarize the findings of the Working Group meeting and other CAL activities related to native language literacy. Section II provides a short review of the literature related to native language literacy for adults in the United States, including a description of what we were able to learn about the history of the practice, a summary of the findings of the CAL survey mentioned above, an overview of articles related to this topic written by practitioners, and a summary of research relevant to native language literacy for adults. Section III describes the activities that led to the formation of the Working Group, and introduces the Working Group participants and the six key programs they represent. The findings that resulted from our collaboration with the Working Group are found in Section IV. Finally, Section V reports on issues practitioners identified as being important to moving the field forward. Recommendations for researchers and policy makers are also summarized. More detailed descriptions of each participating program, written by practitioners at the sites themselves, are printed in their entirety in Appendix 4.

II. Native Language Literacy in the United States: An Overview

Bilingual Education in the Public Schools

Bilingualism and bilingual education are not new phenomena in the United States. Through a process of assimilation, most immigrant families lose their native languages within two or three generations. During this process, however, bilingualism plays a prominent role (Hakuta, 1990). Some of our first schools, predominantly private or parochial, were bilingual in Spanish, German, or other languages. Mission schools for Indians were also bilingual. Many such schools flourished into the early 20th century. After World War I, however, their popularity diminished (Inclan, 1985). Interest in bilingual education reemerged with the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In 1974, a major Supreme Court decision, *Lau vs. Nichols*, found that putting non-English speaking children in classrooms where only English was spoken denied them equal access to education.

Although the use of the native language in the classroom was often controversial, bilingual education programs began to be offered in school districts where larger numbers of elementary school children spoke the same language (McGroarty, 1992). According to Hakuta (1990), the primary justifications given for native language literacy are that developing full proficiency in English takes time, that knowledge in academic content areas acquired through native language instruction will transfer to English, and that early literacy is best developed in a language in which parents can participate. Bilingual educators point out that within the field there continues to be much disagreement between those who advocate bilingual education only as a means to transition students into English as quickly as possible and those who promote the value of bilingual education for the continued maintenance of the first languages of students. Generally speaking the transitional model has been most popular, and even this approach received limited funding during the 1980s (McGroarty, 1992).

Recent Trends in Native Language Literacy with Adults

Although much has been written about the history of bilingual education in the public schools (Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1992; McGroarty, 1992; Crawford, 1989), we know much less about how native language literacy has evolved in the field of adult education. As most in the field of adult education will attest, very little funding has been available for research or to allow programs to document their work. This is particularly true of native language literacy. Funding for adult bilingual education programs as well as funding for research and teacher education in native language literacy has been extremely limited.

This section describes what we do know of the history and current status of adult native language literacy education, using primarily four key documents. First, as part of this study, we asked two members of the Working Group on Native Language Literacy—Dan Rabideau, Literacy Specialist at the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City and José Hunter, an active member of the Hispanic Literacy Council in Chicago—to reconstruct how native language literacy got started and evolved in their areas. Since New York City and Chicago are the two cities where this trend is most prevalent, we believed this would give the reader some insights into how the field has evolved. We also describe details from the two national surveys of native language literacy we were able to find. The first was conducted in 1982 by Solidaridad Humana in New York City, and the second is the 1991 CAL study mentioned earlier.

Native Language Literacy Instruction in New York City

According to Dan Rabideau, the availability in the late 1970s of the Test for General Educational Development (GED) in Spanish created one of the first stimuli for native language literacy instruction in New York City.

> A couple of New York City programs that were preparing students to take the test in Spanish found that some students were not at a High School Equivalency level at all, but were in need of basic skills. By 1980, three New York City community-based organizations were offering Literacy and Basic Education classes in Spanish. During this period, a few small support organizations which later became part of the larger Haitian Centers Council also began to offer literacy in Haitian Kreyol as well. (Rabideau, 1992, p. 1)

By 1982, sufficient interest existed for a Spanish Literacy Investigation Project to be initiated by a local community-based organization, Solidaridad Humana, with funds available through the New York State Education Department (Cook & Quinones, 1983). As part of the study, the authors sent a questionnaire to agencies working nationwide in education with Hispanic adults. They identified 14 programs offering Spanish literacy, including four in the New York City area; one in upstate New York; two in the Chicago area; two near Hartford, Connecticut; one in New Jersey; one in California; and one each in Washington, DC, San Antonio, Texas and Miami, Florida. The authors made site visits to four of the sites, two in New York City and two in Chicago. All of the programs they found at that time were new, none older than four years. Most were part of community-based organizations offering a variety of services in addition to Spanish literacy, which was the least well-funded component, often relying on volunteer teachers. Many mentioned the philosophy of Paulo Freire and a desire to use group activities in the native language to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress as motivations for offering literacy instruction in Spanish. The study also began to identify key elements of successful Spanish literacy programs, materials available in Spanish, and other resource materials useful to Spanish literacy educators.

Dan Rabideau recounts that 1984 was a watershed year for adult literacy in New York City.

> In 1984, the Mayor's Office of New York City earmarked $40 million to be used over a four-year period of time for Literacy and Basic Education as well as English as a Second Language for adults and out-of-school youth. This influx of local funds doubled existing services which had previously been and continue to be provided through a diverse delivery system including the New York City Public Schools, the City University of New York, approximately 50 community-based organizations under the umbrella of the Community Development Agency, and finally, the three library systems of New York City.... The expansion of services applied to mother tongue literacy programs as well. During the first year of the Initiative (FY 1985) 2.5 percent of the total instructional hours funded through the Initiative were dedicated to native language literacy. (Rabideau, 1992, p. 1)

From the beginning, Rabideau points out, many teachers in these programs were people who had taught in their own countries and so were not inexperienced. However, since there was typically only one BENL class in a program, teachers were often more isolated than their colleagues. The lack of instructional materials in the native language also presented problems. Materials from literacy campaigns in other countries were often targeted toward rural farmers and did not reflect the immigrant experience or situations found in urban areas like New York City. As a result of these issues, early on in the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative many teachers and program managers formed the *Comité de Educación Básica en Español* (CEBE).

> At that time, the purposes of the CEBE were limited to sharing curricula and materials. Today, the Committee has many other functions which have come from the needs of a growing field, crucial to the progress of Latinos in the United States. Its Mission Statement declares that the CEBE is based on the principle that all human beings have the right to be educated in the language in which they think. It is therefore necessary that the federal, state, and municipal governments provide funding for basic education in the native language, whether it be English, Spanish, Chinese, etc. (Rabideau, 1992, p. 3)

Activities of the committee include locating, collecting and disseminating research that supports education in the native language (especially Spanish), publishing a newsletter, *El Español en Marcha*, maintaining contact with the media, and publishing the achievements of BENL programs.

By 1991, the number of hours funded by the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative and dedicated to native language literacy was up slightly, to 3.3 percent of the total hours. However, many more programs were offering the service. Twelve programs were participating in the CEBE in Spanish in New York City and the Haitian Centers Council was operating Kreyol classes in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. In spite of the progress made, Rabideau points out, "there is a long way to go." The changing nature of adult education programs, he believes, has recently created an even greater need for native language literacy instruction:

> Compulsory education programs such as those engendered by the Immigration Reform Act of 1986 [required immigrants applying for amnesty to enroll in civics and other classes] and the Family Support Act of 1988 [which targets low-income mothers on Aid to Families with Dependent Children] have brought out increasing numbers of limited English proficient adults who have literacy needs.... Previously, learners' participation was completely voluntary. Low-literate, limited English proficient adults tended not to participate. But the new legislation has made their participation in adult education programs mandatory. (Rabideau, 1992, p. 3)

For example, Rabideau points out that in the first year of the City University of New York's BEGIN Language Program (a Family Support Act (JOBS) program for Hispanic women), it was found that fewer than half of the participants had previously studied English. This percentage was significantly lower among those with fewer than six years of education. Only half of the participants in the program had completed primary education—a figure significantly lower than that for students enrolled voluntarily in day classes that were offered through the New York City Adult Literacy Initiative (Earl & Rabideau, 1992).

Many immigrants in New York City who could benefit from literacy and ESL instruction, Rabideau points out, are not being reached. How many potential learners are not being served? Rabideau notes that according to the 1990 Census, almost one million foreign-born persons moved to New York City from 1980 to 1990, putting immigration at its highest level since 1940.

The Hispanic Literacy Council of Chicago

The Hispanic Literacy Council (HLC) is a coalition of 11 Latino native language literacy providers in Chicago. Through its advocacy agenda and technical assistance, the HLC delivers strong support to its member organizations, as well as to other Spanish literacy providers.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Chicago's Hispanic population grew fast and consistently. Today, more than one-fifth of all Chicagoans are Latinos. This population is one of the city's poorest and suffers as a result of most of the city's socioeconomic problems. Illiteracy is just one of these problems. It is a double problem for those Latinos who not only are unable to read and write in their native language, but are unable to speak, read, and write in English.

There was little local government interest in this problem. Latinos, most of them newly arrived or illegal immigrants, didn't count in elections. Federal and state literacy money for Illinois was administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and allocated only to community colleges or local education agencies (schools). The City College of Chicago system alone absorbed almost 70 percent of that money. Lack of linkages with the community, and excessive administration and bureaucracy costs made this attempt fail. So, grassroots organizations had to address this problem. Many literacy programs were established in community-based organizations, some of them in partnership with the City Colleges. Actually, Chicago is one of the cities with the highest number of native language literacy programs—mostly Spanish literacy programs—in the United States. Later, in 1986, literacy providers found some relief and support through the Office of the Secretary of State of Illinois Literacy Grant. This grant awarded an average of $30,000 to Illinois literacy programs that work with volunteer instructors or utilize volunteer instructors.

In the Spring of 1986, five Spanish language literacy providers founded the Hispanic Literacy Council. Casa Aztlán, Instituto del Progreso Latino, Latino Youth Inc., Por Un Barrio Mejor, and Universidad Popular met to share expertise, concerns, and hopes. At the very beginning, only facilitators, teachers, instructors, tutors, and students were allowed to represent the organizations. Today, administrators and other people from the community involved in Spanish language literacy are welcome.

The HLC immediately started defining its agenda, and found that there was no money available for native language literacy, either in the private sector or the public sector. Moreover, there were no instructional materials, no assessment tools, no curricula, and no training processes. Conscious of the Latino community's need to have native language literacy programs that effectively improve not only people's skills but their lives, the HLC decided to advocate for funds to provide native language literacy, and to develop a plan to offer technical assistance for its members and anyone who wanted to provide Spanish language literacy.

In 1988, the first achievement was the consolidation of the first grant for Spanish literacy for the Chicago Latino community. The City of Chicago through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), allocated about $150,000 to six literacy providers, four of them HLC members. A plan for developing technical assistance with these resources was created: Casa Aztlán would develop instructional materials and curricula; Instituto del Progreso Latino would develop assessment tools; Universidad Popular would provide tutor and facilitator training; and Latino Youth would be in charge of the outreach. One of the results of these efforts is the *Boletín*, a newsletter that has two objectives: to serve as instructional material, and to educate funders and policy makers. This plan worked until 1990 when the City of Chicago decided to move this grant from CDBG to the Chicago Public Library general budget.

In 1989, a partnership was established between the Chicago Public Library Rudy Lozano Branch and the HLC to create the Hispanic Literacy Information Center (HLIC) through a two-year grant. During this time, the HLC had one paid staff person and a hotline for referrals and information. This was a time of growth, with the HLC membership increasing to 11 organizations. Centro Romero, Centro Sin Fronteras, Emerson House, Erie Neighborhood House, Spanish Coalition for Jobs, and SEPPA became new HLC members. Additionally, during this time the HLC held two conferences. The HLC has now entered into an era of redefinition. The membership is closed for now even though there are some Spanish literacy providers wishing to become HLC members. Between now and December 1992 the HLC hopes to redefine its mission, goals, and objectives.

The CAL Survey

Other than the one conducted by Solidaridad Humana in 1983, CAL was able to find no other survey that described native language literacy practices across the country. To develop such a survey, in 1991 project staff developed a questionnaire to be completed either by mail or by phone by programs offering some configuration of native language literacy and ESL literacy instruction to adults and out-of-school youth. (Literacy in this case was construed broadly to include a continuum from initial literacy instruction to instruction at the GED level.)

From the beginning, identifying programs that offer native language literacy was not easy. As a first step, project staff collaborated with the National Clearinghouse for Literacy Education (NCLE), an adjunct ERIC clearinghouse housed at CAL. From among 573 programs for linguistic minorities identified by NCLE, we found 100 programs that indicated that they were offering instruction in learners' native languages. Further follow-up excluded many of these programs. Often, we found the best way to learn about programs was through word of mouth, with one program referring us to another in their area. By September 1991, after six months, we were able to identify 68 programs. Forty-nine of the 68 (72 percent) returned the survey in time to be included in an analysis of the data for the first report (Gillespie, 1991). The data analysis was primarily descriptive but included frequency distributions, rank ordering of responses, calculation of percentiles, and a coding process for recording qualitative data.

The information described below is based on what we learned from these 49 programs. Although it gives us some idea about what is happening in the field, we should point out that it is not exhaustive. There may be other programs in community centers, cultural organizations, and church basements, but we were unable to locate them. Even in the time since this survey was completed, other programs may have both opened and closed their doors. Through NCLE, additional programs are continuing to be identified, surveyed, and added to the database. We hope that sometime in the future an updated analysis of the survey data can be prepared.

The survey found programs from 20 states and the District of Columbia that offer some combination of native language literacy and ESL instruction. The states with the most programs in rank order were, not surprisingly, New York, Illinois, Texas, and California. Sixty-nine percent were located in large, urban areas. Many programs (49 percent) were community-based. Only a few programs (18 percent) described themselves as based within the public schools. Even fewer described themselves as workplace, library-based or correctional education programs. Although a few programs (those from New York City and Chicago) have been offering mother tongue instruction since the early 1970s, over half of the programs have come into existence since 1988.

One of the most revealing facts was the extent to which native language literacy was a product of the Hispanic community. Fully 90 percent of programs offering mother tongue instruction did so in Spanish. This was true even though many programs had students from many language groups enrolled in their school. Seventeen programs had between four and ten different language groups; one noted that 34 languages were represented. Another declined to list the number, commenting that the language diversity is so great that it has been difficult to keep track of the languages of students. Only five programs offered native language literacy in more than one language and only one offered it in three languages (Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese). Other languages included Haitian Kreyol, Hmong, Tagalog and three American Indian tribal languages.

Of the total programs, 76 percent offered native language literacy to the most beginning level literacy learners. In some cases this is the only instruction received by learners. In others, students enrolled both in native language literacy and in oral/aural ESL classes. The second most popular use of native language occurred in pre-GED or GED instruction, in which many students work toward their GED in Spanish. Of a total of 249 native language teachers in all the programs surveyed, 76 percent were native speakers of the language being taught and the remainder were second language learners.

When asked their reasons for offering literacy in students' native languages, programs most frequently (69 percent) mentioned the value of initial instruction in the native language for successful entry into ESL or GED classes. Others cited their belief that it would build the self-confidence and self-esteem of learners (31 percent). Administrators and teachers detailed a number of reasons why they believed that native language literacy is a more efficient and effective means of entry into English language and literacy than ESL literacy alone; many alluded to research in bilingual education.

But in this respect not everyone saw native language the same way. "Spanish is seen [in our program] as an end in itself, not a bridge to English," commented one program. "[Teaching the native language] makes a statement that the native language has equal importance in the society," added another.

Several administrators also mentioned their belief that Spanish was particularly suited to basic literacy instruction since its sound-symbol correspondence is more regular than English. Students could begin to understand the reading process, gain a deeper conceptual knowledge of the structure of written expression, and learn to use various reading strategies before having to tackle the irregularities of the English language.

Some programs also commented on the importance of the use of the native language in the development of a student-centered curriculum. These respondents felt that as newcomers to the country, their students needed time to reconcile where they came from with their new lives and, for those who had little experience in the classroom, time to "learn how to learn" in a classroom setting. When asked the positive benefits of native language literacy, 51 percent of the respondents mentioned their belief that it encourages students to continue their education, 43 percent believed that it helped to raise learners' self esteem and confidence in their ability to learn. Other benefits cited were that native language literacy helped adults to participate in political/social events in the community, to obtain better employment, and to improve their parenting skills.

Many respondents added other details, particularly related to the role native language played in the community. "It helped solidify our outreach to the Puerto Rican community," said one program. "As a result there are now more Hispanics in our ESL classes and we have more collaboration with the Hispanic community." "It raised community awareness of the illiteracy problem, even among those in the program who are literate," responded another. Administrators also described individual examples of success—learners who started out with no literacy receiving their GED or entering college; learners obtaining their U.S. citizenship; a former beginning reader now serving as a tutor; and learners starting their own businesses or obtaining health-related licenses by passing a test in Spanish. Among the obstacles cited were students' reluctance to enroll in native language literacy classes or insufficient enrollment (45 percent), insufficient instructional materials (27 percent), lack of qualified instructors (31 percent), uncertainty about funding or a lack of funding (24 percent), and negative public perceptions of non-English instruction (22 percent).

Published Resources Related to Adult Native Language Literacy

In addition to the surveys mentioned above, we have identified various other kinds of published resources related to native language literacy. The first subsection below describes research which directly or indirectly relates to issues of interest to native language literacy. The second subsection describes articles written about native language literacy by practitioners, with a special emphasis on the rationales and research basis they give for native language literacy. Finally, the last subsection mentions a few other publications in which practitioners describe native language literacy projects they have initiated.

Native Language Literacy Research with Adult Populations

According to many researchers, an important challenge in native language literacy research is to find answers to questions related to the "degree to which literacy knowledge and skills in one language aid or impede the learning of literacy knowledge and skills in the other" (Hornberger, 1989, p. 272). Nevertheless, to date we were able to uncover only two studies of this kind. In the first, Barbara Robson (1982) examined the effects of native language literacy on the performance of Hmong refugees in a three-month ESL program at a refugee processing center in Thailand. Participants were divided into groups according to the presence or absence of formal education and their reading ability in Hmong. Upon completion of the program, participants were tested on English comprehension, reading and oral production and on Hmong reading and writing. Results based on experiences with 62 students suggested that literacy in any language had a major effect on a subject's performance on the ESL tests.

A second study was conducted by Burtoff (1985) with a group of Haitian Kreyol-speaking adult learners enrolled in a program in New York City. Students who received native language literacy instruction were compared with a similar group who received only English language literacy instruction. Burtoff found that those who received native language literacy instruction developed English language proficiency comparable to those who were enrolled in the English-only group and alluded to the fact that other beneficial outcomes such as improved confidence and motivation might be derived from native language instruction.

While these two studies represent a contribution to the field, they were limited in that each study was able to investigate only one population at one point in time. As will be seen later, advocates of research in this area point to the need for further studies of multiple sites and language groups. Such studies need to follow learners over time and to use multiple instruments to assess progress.

While research on cognitive and linguistic issues in native language literacy for adults is limited, a new and growing body of research is beginning to shed light on issues related to the social context of literacy. One researcher in this area is Nancy Hornberger at the University of Pennsylvania. In reviewing literature on first and second language literacy instruction with children, and in her own ethnographic research with school-age and adult Cambodian and Puerto Rican students in the Philadelphia area (1989; 1992; in press), Hornberger has found that many factors come into play in "biliterate" contexts. Multiple and complex interrelationships exist, she believes, between bilingualism and literacy. All of these should be considered when deciding how to offer instruction and in which language.

Hornberger places what she identifies as key dimensions of literacy and bilingualism on the "continua of biliteracy." Among the three continua she describes are a macro-micro continuum (which draws attention to the fact that contexts at every level from face-to-face interaction to national and global policy affect biliteracy), a monolingual-bilingual continuum (the degree to which contexts involve the use of one or both of the students' languages) and an oral-literate continuum (the ways in which contexts mix oral and literate language use) (1992). In an on-going research project sponsored by NCAL, Hornberger is using her model to examine and compare the success of a GED program for Puerto Rican out-of-school youth and an adult ESL class for Cambodian refugees (Hornberger, in press). The work of Hornberger helps adult educators to see that "making linguistic choices is less of an either/or situation than one of context" (Wrigley & Guth, 1991, p. 53). Choices depend very much on which languages are promoted by the community and society at large, how much either language is valued at home and at school, and to what extent speakers rely on oral or written communication.

Steven Reder, another researcher who has devoted his attention to adult literacy in bilingual contexts, has helped adult educators to understand that literacy needs to be seen not just as a technical proficiency, but as a culturally shaped set of practices engaged in by individuals and groups, some of whom may be literate and some of whom may not be. His comparative studies of literacy among Eskimo, Hispanic, and Southeast Asian populations (Reder, 1987) have helped us to consider more closely the functions of literacy in varied linguistic minority communities.

Other researchers in this tradition have also looked at the functions and uses of literacy in bilingual communities. Weinstein-Shr (1989), for example, has looked at social networks patterns and literacy processes among the Hmong in Philadelphia and the role the native language and ESL play in the family. In her ethnographic study of kinship and social network among Mexican-Americans in a Chicago neighborhood, Farr (1989) discovered how a group of men with limited literacy skills learned informally with the help of friends who were themselves not very literate. Klassen (1991) looked closely at the lives of nine Latino men and women living in Toronto, most of whom had little formal schooling and varying levels of Spanish literacy, to discover language domains in which they managed to get along effectively (home, streets, shops, offices) and those where they encountered difficulties (some work settings, school, and church).

Other researchers have looked at community attitudes toward the use of their native language. Brandt (1981) has looked at Native American attitudes toward literacy and the making of written records of oral cultural traditions. Downing and Dwyer (1981) examined the interaction of one Hmong family with the English-speaking community to determine what sort of language contact situations they encountered and how they used (and avoided using) English outside the classroom. More recently, McGinn (1989) studied Hmong high school students' acquisition of their native language, the value of preserving the Hmong language from the perspective of Hmong community leaders, and the transition from an oral to a written society among Hmong living in Fresno, California.

Many recent ethnographic studies of language use of bilingual parents and children in the home have also been conducted to determine such issues as parents' strategies for developing bilingualism in the home and attitudes that determine home language use. Balderas (1988), for example, looked at the attitudes of Hispanic parents and their children toward the use of Spanish at school and at home. Evans (1989) investigated the transmission of Spanish as a family language among parents in Austin, Texas, and Farr (1991) looked at biliteracy practices in the home among Mexican families in Chicago.

Rationales for Native Language Literacy

Another category of articles reveal what programs and experts in the field see as the rationales and research bases for native language literacy. Klaudia Rivera, Director of El Barrio Popular in New York City describes linguistic, pedagogical, and linguistic rationales for teaching adults to read in their native language (cited in Rabideau, 1989). Like many adult educators, Rivera refers to two hypotheses developed by James Cummins as central bases for the *linguistic rationale* for teaching adults in the native language. She points out that, according to Cummins' Interdependency Hypothesis, skills and knowledge developed in one language will transfer to another language, given adequate exposure and time to learn the new language (Rivera, 1988). A second hypothesis, the Common Underlying Proficiency Hypothesis (Cummins, 1983), stresses that the development of first language reading skills provide "a deep conceptual and linguistic proficiency that is strongly related to the development of literacy and general academic skills in the second language" (Rivera, 1990). Thus, when adults are taught to read in a language they already know, "they can use the linguistic strengths they bring into the program and draw upon the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their first language" (Rivera, 1988, 1990). This perspective, Rivera and others point out, also alludes to a *pedagogical rationale* familiar to adult educators; adults learn best when they build on what they already know (Ovando & Collier, 1985).

In addition to cognitive and psycholinguistic issues, many others point out *sociocultural rationales* for native language literacy development and the value of bilingualism and biliteracy for individuals and communities (Rivera, 1990; Kalmar, 1989). Rivera refers to new definitions of literacy as an active process of recovering one's own voice and history (Giroux, 1987) and to the role of the native language in allowing students to retain ties to their culture and past. Pedro Pedraza (cited in Rabideau, 1989) points to the lack of recognition by policy makers that there may be other language needs besides learning English, particularly in large urban areas where much daily activity and commerce take place in other languages. Although English is the language of power in the U.S., providing access to jobs and prestige, Pedraza points out that biliteracy can also be an asset in the job market and in the community.

Other authors echo related themes that question the assumption that English can and should be learned as a *replacement* for the native language (Wrigley & Guth, 1991). Kalmar points out that far from being a barrier to communication in many workplaces and community activities, the native language can serve as a tool to facilitate dialogue among varying groups. Wrigley points out that "the degree to which native language literacy is recognized and valued in the United States varies widely" (Wrigley & Guth, 1992, p. 109). She describes a framework developed by Ruíz (1988) that presents viewpoints regarding language diversity. Language diversity can be seen as either a "resource" or a "problem." "The resource orientation sees both economic and personal benefit in multilingualism, regarding the language skills of immigrants as a resource that should be conserved, developed, and invested, particularly in schools and the workplace.... The language-diversity-as-"problem"-orientation, however, views cultural diversity as a weakness to be overcome rather than as one of the country's greatest strengths" (Wrigley & Guth, 1992, p. 109). A third orientation, Wrigley adds, ignores non-English literacy, considering English literacy as "the only literacy that counts."

> When this orientation shapes policy, several negative outcomes may result: 1) important knowledge and skills are ignored, 2) literacy surveys present a skewed picture of the true levels of reading and writing of the population, 3) program decisions are made on false premises, and 4) learners are defined by what they don't know (English), rather than what they do know (the mother tongue). (1992, p. 110)

Practitioner and Student-Written Articles

In addition to research articles and those that address rationales for native language literacy, a few other kinds of practitioner-written articles exist. Several articles describe the creation of innovative programs (Pacio-Lindin, 1991; Clymer, 1989; González & Espinoza, 1988), special activities in the classroom such as popular theater and the use of videotapes (Rivera, 1990), popular education processes (Young & Padilla, 1990), involving students in writing and publishing (Wolfe, 1987), the use of native language in the adult ESL literacy classroom (Nash, Cason, Rhum, McGrail, & Gómez-Sanford, in press), language experience (Spener, 1991), the use of a phonics-based curriculum process (Dean, 1989), and materials available in Spanish (González, 1992). In recent years, a few other articles have also been published describing programs in which parents and children read stories and poems together in the native language and the implications for the empowerment of both parents and children (Auerbach, 1989; Ada, 1989; Quintero, 1990; Eno, 1987). In addition, native language literacy students are increasingly publishing materials they have created themselves. For example, the Programa de Educación Popular del Barrio at Hunter College has published narratives from an oral history project with Puerto Rican women; Bronx Educational Services has published *Latino Connections*, describing the lives of Latinos in New York City; and many programs such as the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Boston produce student-written journals and anthologies.

III. The CAL Working Group Meeting

The Working Group Members

In developing plans for Year 2 activities, staff members at CAL discussed the need for a forum at which literacy practitioners and researchers interested in native language literacy could share and analyze what is happening in the field and what is needed to move the field forward. CAL staff recognized that practitioners and those closest to learners should play a key role in naming agendas for further research and action. It is out of such a forum, we believed, that we could begin to identify the kinds of research questions that most need to be addressed and gather the support of potential sites at which research could take place. By working together at this early stage of the research and development process, we could begin to develop a system through which to seek support both for continued research in the field and for program funding.

Working Group members were chosen both for their expertise and for their diversity. Among the members were experienced native language literacy teachers, program administrators (many of whom also had a strong interest in research), researchers, members of clearinghouses, and literacy consultants and trainers. (A list of participants is found in Appendix 2.) The teachers and program administrators represented six diverse sites around the country. The sites varied by the language and ethnic groups they served and by the kind of programs offered, but each had also been selected for their promising practices in the field. El Paso Community College, where participants are primarily Mexican-American, serves a predominantly female population, many of whom are associated with the JOBS program targeting AFDC participants. El Barrio Popular, in New York City, is a community-based program serving primarily Puerto Rican and Dominican students. This program, in addition to native language literacy, offers innovative cooperative work experiences for participants. Given the large number and diversity of mother tongue literacy programs in the Chicago area, two programs were selected to participate. Casa Aztlán is one of the oldest community-based programs in urban Chicago and one of the founding members of the Hispanic Literacy Council, a coalition of programs which advocate for the use of mother tongue literacy. Triton College, located in a suburban area of Chicago, makes use of volunteers to offer one-to-one native language literacy instruction. In addition, programs representing Haitian and Southeast Asian native language programs were selected. They are the Lao Family Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, one of the few programs in the country providing mother tongue literacy in the Hmong language, and the Haitian Multi-Service Center, located in the Boston area.

In addition to site representatives, several consultants made presentations and facilitated activities at the Working Group meeting. These included Dr. Heide Spruck Wrigley of Aguirre International in California, Mr. Dan Rabideau of the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City, and Ms. Loren McGrail of World Education in Boston. In addition, Ms. Fran Keenan from the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, Dr. Sharon Snyder from the Refugee Service Center at CAL, Dr. Richard Duran from the University of California at Santa Barbara, Dr. Elsa Auerbach from the University of Massachusetts, Ms. Peggy Dean from the Northwest Educational Development Cooperative and Ms. Aliza Becker from the Traveler's Aid Society of Chicago participated. Altogether, 24 individuals attended the Working Group meeting.

The Meeting Agenda

During the first morning of the Working Group meeting each site was asked to describe their program, including their successes as well as factors which have facilitated and impeded native language literacy instruction in their communities. In the early afternoon, Dan Rabideau of the Literacy Assistance Center facilitated a group discussion on the value of native language literacy. The last part of the afternoon was devoted to issues related to the question: How do we know native language literacy "works" and for whom? Activities were facilitated by Loren McGrail from World Education. The group discussed the kinds of assessment processes and tools they use, their underlying purposes, their strengths and weaknesses in improving instruction, and their utility in convincing others of the validity and legitimacy of native language literacy. During the second meeting day, Heide Wrigley from Aguirre International facilitated a session about what is needed to move the field forward. She focused on questions such as the difference native language literacy is making, what is needed so we can do our work, and recommendations for further research and for policy makers. Marilyn Gillespie from CAL closed the meeting by facilitating a session on "The Next Steps." During this session, the group discussed plans for a future meeting, possible funding sources, upcoming presentations at national conferences, and the need for further publications and policy papers. The findings of the meeting will be discussed in Section IV.

Overview of Working Group Programs

As part of their activities with the Working Group, each site was asked to write a report summarizing their work in the field. The following section summarizes the activities at each site. The complete site reports submitted by each program are found in Appendix 4.

Casa Aztlán

Casa Aztlán is a community-based organization located in the heart of Chicago's Pilsen community, serving the largest Hispanic population living in the area. It has been providing leadership and promoting self-determination to the community through educational, cultural, youth, and family services since 1972.

Casa Aztlán's Spanish Literacy Program seeks to provide both immediate and long-term solutions to Spanish and English language illiteracy in Pilsen. Besides the adult education component, Casa Aztlán offers the community several programs and services such as an after school program, a leadership youth program, and counseling for families of possible high school dropouts that make Edu-Acción (adult education) a comprehensive literacy program. The program's educational philosophy is to pursue the empowerment of the community through leadership and self-determination. It uses the Freirean methodology of liberation education, as well as life-skills approaches.

In fiscal year 1992, 198 men and women participated in the Spanish literacy classes; the majority of these students live in Pilsen, which has the highest concentration of poverty in the area. For most students, going to Casa Aztlán is their first classroom experience in the United States, and at the same time, their first point of access for other educational programs and social services. During every eight-week module, an average of 440 adults come to Casa Aztlán to participate in one of the Edu-Acción's programs such as Spanish literacy, ESL literacy, GED, or citizenship classes. Since Casa Aztlán was established, students have played an important role in the community and in the organization itself. The doors are open when there are no classes; students—as well as anyone in need—come for different kinds of services, special activities, and events.

Edu-Acción's staff has gained a great deal of expertise since the program started. Working as a team, staff and volunteers meet every week. Two of the current staff members were previous GED learners. All staff and students, including the Edu-Acción coordinator, facilitators, and tutors, are Latinos whose first language, in most cases, is Spanish and whose second language is English.

For Edu-Acción's unique peer tutoring system, the program recruits and trains community residents proficient in Spanish to work alongside instructors. Because the tutors share the same linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural background as their students, the tutors lend a nonjudgmental and personal touch using a nontraditional, nonthreatening teaching style.

In 1985, after assessing adult students in its ESL classes, Casa Aztlán determined that the majority of the students who dropped out did not know how read or write in their native language. Recognizing that there was little chance that English language literacy could be achieved by these students, Casa Aztlán launched its Spanish literacy component. After graduation from the Spanish literacy program, most students now enroll in ESL/GED classes.

When the program started, it lacked instructional materials. One of the staff members designed a Spanish language literacy syllabus sensitive to the Latino community's needs, which has worked successfully and has been replicated by other community-based education providers. The next logical step was to develop workbooks and assessment tools based on these curricula. Financial constraints, however, have delayed this important material development process.

For initial assessment, potential students are asked to fill out a registration form (with name, address, phone number, social security number, etc.). Specialized staff observe this process to determine whether or not the person knows how to read and write. Afterwards, Edu-Acción staff interview the new student to establish the student profile and personal goals. When Spanish literacy instruction seems to be needed, Edu-Acción staff encourages the learner to take "clases de español" as the first step to reaching his/her goals. Then, the student takes a Spanish literacy placement test designed by a group of Casa Aztlán's facilitators. For ongoing evaluation, Edu-Acción assesses a student's educational objectives, as well as other objectives, such as finding a job and adequate health care, because these other objectives often are very relevant for educationally disadvantaged persons. Special tools have been developed to assess these particular needs. A file with all tests, reports, and assessments is established for each student.

Although Casa-Aztlán's Spanish literacy program has worked with scarce (almost nonexistent) resources and has received only token amounts from both public and private funds, it has successfully served an average of 200 students per year. Some have moved on to ESL classes or continued studying for the GED. Moreover, some students have become Casa Aztlán's board members, others have run for local school council representative, and many of them have been involved individually in community issues. This success is the result of the large amount of volunteerism and dedication from the Edu-Acción staff—most of whom are underpaid—and peer tutors, as well as the result of the great effort made by the students.

El Barrio Popular Education Program

El Barrio Popular Education Program in New York is a community based adult, native language literacy program located in one of the oldest and most vibrant Puerto Rican communities in the United States. Over the last six years it has grown from two literacy classes to a comprehensive community-based, adult basic education program that includes economic development activities.

The program was founded with the commitment and the belief that Puerto Ricans in particular, and Latinos in general, have a right to be educated in the language they speak. The Puerto Rican community is unusual in that, regardless of the times when the community has been suppressed, it has managed to retain use of its language. The classroom curriculum often reflects this belief by critically analyzing the status of the Spanish language in this society. The program has an organic relationship to the community and is rooted in the issues that affect Latinos in New York City. One of the long-term goals of the program is to be managed and run by students and former students; thus, at the present time, 50 percent of the paid staff are also students in the program.

El Barrio Popular also offers native language literacy, ESL, High School Equivalency classes, leadership development, and computer instruction. In order to respond to the pressing economic needs of the community, the program is implementing economic development activities; presently, students are running two different worker cooperatives and are in the process of initiating a third one. There are 87 participants in the program. Most are Puerto Rican (56 percent), 29 percent are from the Dominican Republic, and 15 percent are from other countries in South and Central America. They are predominantly women with children and are often single parents. Some of them are grandparents.

Most students hear about the program by word of mouth. Many have family and/or friends in the program. Budget cuts and the need for basic education in Spanish have affected the program's ability to serve the highest number of interested individuals. Therefore, the program has to keep a waiting list. Due to high retention rates, the number of openings for new students are very few.

The literacy and ESL curriculum is community-based, student-generated, and participatory. The curriculum—which is based on a combination of Freirean-inspired methodology, popular education, and sociolinguistic research—validates the linguistic and literacy practices of the community and uses materials that are generated by the students' life stories and struggles.

A variety of measures are used for assessing student progress. The teachers have access to or are directly involved in the placement/assessment processes. Three times a year (beginning, mid-term, and end) students' unedited writing samples are collected in the classroom. Students are also tested biannually with the standardized tests that are mandated by the funders. There are a variety of other means of assessment, formal and informal, that teachers use to help students identify their progress throughout the year. A clear example of "progress" is also when students demonstrate their abilities by taking initiative in their lives, in the program, and in the community. Most of the students change their educational goals considerably from the time they first arrive in the program. Usually students arrive wanting to learn to read and write in their native language. During the course of their studies at El Barrio Popular Education Program, many decide to pursue a higher degree once they graduate from the program.

The Haitian Multi-Service Center

The HMSC is a community-based organization located in Dorchester, in the heart of Boston, where 80 percent of Boston's Haitian community lives. In addition to Haitian Kreyol and ESL instruction, the HMSC provides several social services such as maternal and child health education (Sante Manman Se Sante Pitit); AIDS education, counseling and advocacy; document translation; bilingual childcare; and refugee resettlement.

The unifying philosophy of the HMSC is for Haitians to help Haitians. Most of the staff is Haitian and some of them were previously learners at the HMSC. This experience gives these teachers a strong understanding of their students' needs and lives, enabling the teachers to present material highly relevant to their learners. The adult education program is guided by a participatory view in which the classes are learner-centered and the program is teacher-centered.

HMSC serves 380 Haitian students in language and literacy classes. Overall, most of the learners are low-income and 40 percent are unemployed. Learners typically have had four to eight years of education in Haiti, and some are not literate at all. About 50 of the learners are enrolled in the Kreyol literacy class. The recruitment of students is not problematic; because the program offers a wide range of services to the Haitian community, the adult education program is well known and waiting lists are long. The HMSC has dedicated itself to establishing a Kreyol literacy component for the illiterate immigrants. The program is designed to respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of the learners. Kreyol literacy provides a strong background for ESL in the transitional classes, and serves as a language to which learners and teachers refer for further comprehension or for explanations in special situations.

The language and literacy work includes social analysis and skills development. Classes do problem-posing activities through codes, in which teachers structure the discussion so that students are able to describe, identify, recognize, analyze, and take action on a particular problem of importance in their lives. Students come up with their own ways of addressing the problem. Examples of codes are pictures, key words, students' writings (taken out of dialogue journals or from other students' writings, problem-posing trees, etc.). Writing is an important part of the curriculum. Teachers use the Language Experience Approach (LEA) and dialogue journals, allowing students to write their own entries. Students' writings are in turn used for codes or for grammar exercises, and some of them get published in the Center's magazine. Teachers also use literacy texts like *Goute Sel* and *Appran Li* because students often like to use a book as a guide. Additional reading resources are a proverb book, newspaper articles, writings from HMSC's students' magazine and a book of students' writings.

The Haitian Center uses a variety of assessment techniques. Most importantly teachers use classroom observation and classroom attendance. Also, other students' reactions and self-evaluation are used as methods to assess a student's progress. Some teachers keep a folder and collect work of the students so they can demonstrate their progress. Examples of progress are a student's increased participation in the class and the program; student notebooks and journals, which show improvement in writing style and length of entries; published student writing in the Center's magazine; students working together to develop *fotonovelas* and language experience stories; increased confidence; and better numeracy skills.

El Paso Community College

The Spanish Literacy Program is a part of the Literacy Education Action (LEA) program at El Paso Community College which is located in El Paso, Texas, a border city adjacent to the city of Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The philosophy of the LEA program is based on a holistic approach to education. LEA strives to use the student's life experiences as the basis for instruction. The programs are designed to help adult learners become full participants in their community.

LEA serves approximately 1,500 students annually, of which 35-40 are enrolled in the Spanish Literacy Program each session. Most of the students are immigrants from Mexico. Some of them may have attended up to six years of school, while others did not have the opportunity to attend due to their economic status and/or traditional or cultural beliefs.

In addition to a full-time director, two coordinators, a vocational education literacy liaison, and an information coordinator, the staff for Literacy Center programs consists of nine instructional facilitators and 14 tutors. The facilitators and tutors serve as role models for learning a second language because most of them are from the community of the learners. Many write their own stories which are an important part of the curriculum.

The Spanish Literacy Program started in 1990 because of the LEA's own experience with referring students to the community college's ESL program. Many students lacked the educational background or ability to successfully complete those programs. In order to place learners in a Spanish literacy class, the staff inquires about the students' previous school background and does a review of unedited writing samples. After initial intake, a student completes a two week orientation/assessment class called Exploration. Information gained from Exploration enables staff to place students in either a Spanish, Bilingual, or English literacy instructional program. Upon completion of the instructional program, learners participate in Advancement classes which are intended to help them deal with the transition from the literacy program to credit ESL and vocational college classes. In all programs, the staff is striving to help the students develop the behaviors involved in becoming a successful vocational student.

LEA's learner-centered curriculum aims to help students become full participants in their community, so the program starts by involving the students in the curriculum development process. Once the students decide upon topics for discussion, tutors and facilitators follow a five-step teaching approach—initial inquiry, a structured learning activity, a language experience, reading in context, and home assignment. Teachers also implement some "deliberate" lessons, that is, lessons that were not chosen by the students. The program believes that the students need help in other areas such as self-esteem, goal setting, and career development.

As community-outreach educators, LEA developed an alternative form of assessment that reflects a sociocultural view of literacy and learning. The initial assessment is a two-week process that helps learners identify their educational goals in order to continue in LEA's programs or be referred to other programs throughout the county. One of the major tools for on-going assessment is the student portfolio. A portfolio is completed for each student every session. It is used to evaluate students at the beginning of the session, in the middle, and at the end.

Triton Community College

Lilia Salazar-Holst coordinates the Spanish literacy program, Escribir y Leer es Poder, at Triton Community College. The program is part of the Adult Continuing Education Area of Triton Community College in west suburban Chicago. The Spanish literacy program has recently been relocated to Triton's Community Center, Nuevos Horizontes, which is strategically located in Melrose Park, accessible to the largest concentration of Hispanic and minority students. The program's philosophy is to help everyone who comes to reach her or his goals. After a friendly interview and a test, a person can become a student of the Spanish literacy program or can be referred to another program at Triton Community College. The program's educational philosophy is to give students the necessary skills to learn another language and to understand the society in which they are currently living.

Nearly 40 percent of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) students, including the Spanish literacy students, did not complete elementary school in their own country. Of the 52 Spanish literacy students, 48 come from rural areas of Mexico and four from other countries. The age range is 30 to 60 years old. Half of the Spanish literacy students are female. All of them work in places such as factories, restaurants, hospitals, churches, or are receiving public aid. Student recruitment has been done through ESL classes and flyers distributed at the Hispano-Fest at Nuevos Horizontes. To determine a student's literacy level, the program uses a placement test (Prueba de Habilidad) designed by Peggy Dean of the Northwest Educational Development Cooperative.

The Spanish literacy coordinator is the only paid staff member in the Spanish literacy program and shares the secretary with the English literacy program. The other staff is comprised of volunteer tutors, most of whom are Hispanic and currently studying ESL at the community college. They are recognized for their services during a yearly volunteer recognition day.

The ABE department saw a growing number of nonnative English speakers with no or low educational skills repeating the first two levels of their program two or four times. Also, the number of enrolled ESL and GED students has grown, but sometimes this increment is due to the high percentage of repeating students. So the ABE department started a Spanish literacy program. In May 1991, a coordinator was hired for 30 hours a week to develop a Spanish literacy program. After an initial needs assessment, the coordinator designed two Spanish literacy levels: totally illiterate and low reading, writing, and grammar skills.

The Illinois Secretary of State grant, under which Triton's literacy programs are funded, required one-to-one tutoring, but because of the shortage of volunteer tutors, group sessions under the guidance of several volunteers were implemented. After a difficult start the Spanish literacy program has become more successful. There is a consistent group of tutors, so the students feel more confident and relaxed. They talk more about themselves, their jobs, and their opinions. They are not afraid to speak up anymore, so the program is progressing. This summer, three students moved up to an upper level which will prepare them for the GED.

The coordinator designed a tutors' manual with exercises for Spanish literacy and developed a curriculum for each level. Under the guidance of the coordinator, the tutors try to link group sessions with the English classes. Even though student's needs are the program's main concern, it also tries to build a bridge with English, mainly focusing on speaking and listening.

The program has faced several constraints. First, the Spanish literacy coordinator's position has been reduced to 20 hours a week. Another constraint is that the tutor recruitment has not been very successful. In 11 months only 20 tutors were recruited. The tutors were mostly ESL students from the community, but most of them are not available anymore. Some reasons for this are that people prefer to spend their time on a job so that they can earn more money, their shifts are continuously changing so they have inconsistent attendance, or they do not have the ability or patience to tutor. Approximately 70 students have been tested so far for the current fall session, but the program has been unable to serve all of them. Another constraint is the lack of Spanish instructional material. Adapting English materials has not always been very effective.

In the future, the coordinator would like to develop a booklet of exercises using other countries' literacy books, songs, and popular sayings; to expand Spanish literacy services to other communities within Triton's district; to recruit volunteer tutors among advanced Spanish language students; to collect Spanish material to develop an exercise booklet; to extend programs to Spanish family literacy; and to improve the tutors' manual.

Lao Family/Milwaukee Area Technical College Basic Skills ESL & Hmong Bilingual Education Program

Milwaukee is one of the largest and most ethnically diverse cities in Wisconsin. Many Germans, Norwegians, Slovenians, Croats, Russians, Ukrainians, Hispanics and Southeast Asians (Lao, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Hmong) live in the city. At the present time, 19 percent of the state's total population of 32,194 Hmong lives in Milwaukee (Bauer, 1991). Many Hmong came to the United States in 1975 to seek a better economic situation and better education for their children.

It was a tough experience for the Hmong to come to the United States. The first and most shocking experience that the Hmong faced was their inability to communicate in English. Because of that they were also unable to find jobs so they had to depend on public assistance for survival (Cheng, 1987).

The Lao Family Community, Inc. and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) Community Based Organization was established in March 1989 as a state-funded outreach program sponsored by MATC at Lao Family Community, Inc. Ninety percent of the students are Hmong and the remaining 10 percent are Lao and Vietnamese. The Lao Family/MATC Basic Skills, ESL and Hmong Bilingual Education Program is the first educational program provided at the Lao Family Community, Inc. It is one of the few programs throughout Wisconsin that offers Hmong and Lao adult bilingual education in basic skills, ESL, and GED preparation. Most of the beginning level students require more bilingual instructional delivery. The percent of the bilingual instructional delivery will decrease as students' levels of ESL proficiency increase.

The program started because many Hmong adult students had made very little academic progress despite the years of ESL and basic skills instruction they received from non-Hmong, nonbilingual certified teachers. Their enrollment and attendance in those classes were also very poor. Because of their poor English language skills the Hmong were unable to find jobs.

Another reason for starting a native language literacy program was to preserve and promote the native language because it is an essential identity for every individual to maintain. The native language is the main motivation for self-pride that will bond the individual with his/her culture and group. It is a necessity to acquire a second language. If one already masters how to read and write one language, it is much easier to learn other languages.

Classroom surveys and discussions support that native language instruction for beginning levels is more productive and causes less learning stress than monolingual instruction. Most students agreed that they learn more in native language instruction. They also receive more respect and recognition from the native language instructors. Some students claim that two hours of instruction per day, five days per week is not enough time for them to learn. They need more time. They even write letters to ask the state to increase the number of hours of available instruction per week. This indicates that they prefer native language instruction and find it to be the most appropriate instruction for them. One of the biggest incentives in native language instruction is that students and teachers can communicate easily, which creates an inviting learning environment in the classroom. Many Hmong mother students carry babies on their backs during classroom time because they don't want to miss the class and fall behind their classmates. They rarely skip school; if they do, they always to remember to call the instructors.

IV. Findings of the Working Group Meeting

During the Working Group meeting, several issues emerged as central to discussions of native language literacy, including the underlying definitions of literacy held by staff; the sociopolitical and sociocultural dimension of native language literacy; the role of the learners in the program; which teachers are the most qualified to teach native language literacy; and finally assessment and funding. These issues came up in a variety of contexts. In this section we have grouped the issues according to what we saw as major themes: the value of native language literacy, the issues that affect the outcomes of native language literacy and the outcomes of native language literacy.

The Value of Native Language Literacy

Although all practitioners and researchers from the Working Group value native language literacy, definitions of native language literacy differ from program to program and sometimes from individual to individual. These definitions of literacy shape program activities and explain why programs differ in the kinds of services they offer to students. All of the programs started offering native language literacy for linguistic reasons. They all agree that adult students tend to do much better in English if they first learn how to read and write in their own language. Literacy helps adult learners draw upon existing knowledge and strengths. Because so many students with limited first language literacy skills failed in the regular ESL programs, programs had to try something else. Low-level first language literacy skills students frequently drop out of regular ESL classes or keep on struggling with English without making much progress.

While many programs focus on the linguistic aspects of literacy, most members of the working group also see education from a broader perspective, focusing on literacy as a process of personal growth. Most native language literacy Working Group members see literacy linked to larger empowerment issues. Literacy, they believe, should encourage involvement and participation in a democratic society. These individuals believe that literacy can't be separated from the political, economic, and social situation of learners. Some programs, such as El Barrio Popular, see native language literacy as a basic human right.

Issues that Influence the Outcomes of Native Language Literacy

Many issues influence the outcomes of native language literacy, according to Working Group members. The issues vary from program to program. We will mention the most striking ones as they came up during the meeting.

Funding

In all cases funding is a major underlying factor affecting the outcomes of native language literacy. At the time of our meeting, several Working Group members' hours had been recently cut and some of the members were even uncertain if they would have a job the fall semester. One member commented that one reason native language literacy programs aren't getting funding is that research hasn't been done to document the value of native language literacy. People come to her and say, "My organization will fund special literacy sections if you can show us some research." They want hard and fast documentation. They want a study. She suggested that the group work hard to find funding for research so that, in turn, program funding might become more available. Another member added that we need to advocate for long-term funding so that programs themselves conduct research in addition to providing their regular services. Many programs are always worrying about funding for the following year and never have time to conduct research to prove the value of native language literacy.

The Social-Political Context of Native Language Literacy

One of the most significant issues, in particular, for understanding assessment of native language literacy, is an understanding of the way native language exists in relationship to both the country of origin and to the English language. This is nowhere more evident that in El Barrio Popular's declaration that native language literacy is not only an entitlement but also a right, and that "Puerto Ricans in particular and Latinos in general have a right to be educated in the language they speak." (See page 42 in Appendix 4 of this report.) The language issue is a continuous part of the curriculum and recruitment. Old students share with new students why it is important to learn the native language first. For Haitians, learning to read and write in Kreyol is a political statement about who should have power. The politics of Kreyol are related to the disregard in which Kreyol is held compared with French, the country's official but second language. The Haitian Center had a meeting of the entire center where everybody came together and talked about Haitian Kreyol in political terms and of its relationship to the history of oppression. They talked about how Haitian Kreyol was given an extra boost in 1990 because of events in Haiti—that Haitian president Aristide's platform was in Kreyol shaped the way people thought about their language in relationship to French. That native language literacy was better than regular ESL because of linguistic reasons was only a part of the discussion. For Laotians and Hmong refugees, learning to read and write in the mother tongue is not only a way to stay connected to their past and culture but a way to get ahead in the new country.

The Value of the Native Language in the United States

Working Group members felt that native languages are generally not highly valued in the United States, where immigrants are often stigmatized for not speaking English and that this is reflected in the way learners initially feel about their own languages. School administrators, employers, and even regular ESL teachers often only look at the amount of literacy a person has in English. The fact that a person is literate in their own language is often not considered.

Members also felt that children who go to schools where they only teach in English can become resistant toward their own language, and this can change their relationship with their parents. Parents who are not able to speak English with their children are not able to help the children with their homework and are not able to communicate with the teachers. One Working Group member mentioned that many Hmong children refuse to learn Hmong literacy even though their parents are very interested in having them learn it as a means to maintain their cultural heritage. Another member mentioned that in Lowell, Massachusetts, when Hmong children receive bilingual education, parents peek into the classroom to see if they can pick up anything from those classes. By allowing parents to participate, family literacy could promote native language literacy.

The Sociocultural Context

Many programs agreed that this context can have a strong impact on the outcomes of native language literacy. One Working Group member mentioned, for example, that the Hmong students at the Lao Family Community in Milwaukee have a very strong belief in their own cultural heritage which affects the way they feel about learning their native language. Students, especially the older ones, are determined to learn English by first learning native language literacy. Many Hmong adult students have been unable to find jobs because of their educational background and their inability to speak English after five to ten years in the United States. Hmong students often say, "We need to maintain our identity and language and build from what we can and what we know." All program reports mention that the programs are located in areas where many businesses, restaurants, medical offices, and stores are bilingual. Employers in those businesses need bilingual workers in those communities. Thus, the sociocultural context is promoting the use of the native language.

The Ethnicity, Educational Background and the Employment Status of the Staff

Most Working Group programs have people from the communities of the learners as teachers and/or tutors. The members felt strongly that this greatly improved programs for many reasons. The teachers can serve as role models and will know the issues of the learners. And, according to one Working Group member, the learners can ask questions, receive motivation, and get help from a teacher who understands them. They trust, they share the same culture, receive encouragement, and they can bring up problems in ways that can't be addressed in English. The native language literacy teacher who shares the background of students understands the school system in the home country and has the linguistic knowledge of the native language. Another member added that a teacher's influence is enormous in Haiti so he believes it is better to have somebody teach who is from the community of the learners. Another member, who speaks Spanish as a second language, said the fact that students can help her with her Spanish creates a more egalitarian relationship in the classroom. Another member said it is possible to have good teachers who speak the native language and are familiar with the culture of the learners, but who themselves are not from the learners' culture. It is also important to consider if teachers have received training in teaching literacy. Another important factor is to look at whether teachers are full-time or part-time. For example, part-time teachers have very little time outside their classroom hours to think about, much less to develop systematic ways to assess progress (McGrail, 1992).

The Use of Volunteers in the Programs

Another issue of concern to programs was the role of volunteer tutors. Many Working Group programs have volunteer tutors play an important role in the teaching of the native language. The volunteers often come from the community of the learners and can serve as role models for the learners. One Working Group member said that her program totally depends on the volunteers for one-to-one tutoring. However, many volunteers don't stay very long or can't commit themselves to working regularly. The program's contract requires one-to-one tutoring, but this cannot be done because of a shortage of tutors as compared to the large group of literacy students in need. She now coordinates small group sessions headed by one tutor instead. Another Working Group member added that even when there is a consistent group of volunteers, initial training and ongoing support is needed. The Working Group summarized that to implement a model based on the use of volunteers has been problematic. Others pointed out that while the use of volunteers can be successful in some instances, it is important to advocate for funding for full-time staff.

The Curriculum Development Process

For many programs, curriculum development is also an issue. In many programs, students and teachers work together on finding themes that are of interest to the learners. In these programs, the curriculum might include a topic such as language rights and will incorporate a wide range of native language literacy uses, such as letter writing and poetry. Such a curriculum might also incorporate language experience approach strategies to develop resources for instruction. In programs with a participatory curriculum development process, the learners take an active role in designing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum. Programs differ in the emphasis they put on the personal, sociopolitical, and sociocultural dimensions of native language literacy. (Wrigley & Guth, 1992). This is especially important in looking at assessment because programs want to document progress in those dimensions they consider most significant. A native language literacy program might have different tools or procedures for each of these dimensions (McGrail, 1992).

The Role of the Student in the Program

The role of the student varies from program to program. In most programs, the students do more than just get involved in the curriculum development process. They also govern programs, formulate research questions, and are involved in program-based action research. Some students have become teachers, facilitators, and tutors. In the opinion of the Working Group, students should have options to choose in what language they will study before they enter classes. However, some members of the Working Group added that many low-level first language literacy students will frequently say "I want to study English." In such cases, the intake person has to do a lot of counseling and orientation with the new student before the student makes a decision regarding which language to study. By all means, students should not be pressured towards ESL. Regarding student, teacher and program assessment and evaluation, programs said that student participation could be greater in their own programs. According to some site descriptions, the role of the students is more limited in some Working Group programs than in others, or may be uneven. In those programs, student input is greatest in deciding the content of the curriculum. Another Working Group member wants her program to work on accountability to the students.

She said that we too often only talk about accountability to the funders but we shouldn't forget the students.

The Outcomes of Native Language Literacy

What programs see as the outcomes of native language literacy instruction are shaped profoundly by a program's definition of native language literacy. The outcomes are also shaped by what kind of program design is being implemented, the sociopolitical context, where the native language literacy program is being offered and by whom (McGrail, 1992). The Working Group mentioned an enormous number of positive outcomes as a result of their native language literacy work. We will just mention the most striking ones as they came up during the meeting. Many of these outcomes are interrelated.

- Many programs mentioned the fact that students have told them that they did not feel they were able to learn in ESL programs. Often, they left ESL programs frustrated. Programs reported that more students stay in the native language literacy program. Learners mention feeling they are respected and they are learning and that is why they are staying in the native language literacy class. These are the things they missed in ESL programs.

- Some programs mention that native language literacy provides students with the self-confidence to continue their education. Most of the students initially mention that they want to learn English but their goals often change over time. Several programs mentioned stories of students who have completed GED's or gone on to college. Other students have developed specific job ambitions.

- In native language literacy classes, students are immediately able to engage in deep and complex thinking without hitting a language barrier, unlike in ESL classes where, according to one group member, concepts get oversimplified and "deadened." This ease of communication allows students to become more independent and participate more fully in discussions. Students in many programs develop the curriculum with teachers by expressing their goals, submitting writings and *fotornovelas*, doing action research and conducting oral histories in the communities, and by contributing to programs' newsletters. Native language literacy often facilitates a cooperative, open, trusting classroom where both students and teachers feel at ease.

- In many native language literacy programs, students start validating their own language, not only as a way to learn English but as something valuable in itself. They feel stronger about their own language and therefore about their cultural identity.

- By using the native language, students are often able to build a consciousness of language issues and learning by discussing how to use metalinguistic strategies and communicative competencies.

- Students can learn content skills (such as math and science) more quickly, which enables them to move more quickly into GED or college courses once they upgrade their English language skills.

- Many programs report that students' overall involvement in literacy programs increases. Students get concerned about the program's survival, become advocates for native language literacy, and recruit other students. Students in El Barrio Popular, for example, have done presentations for teacher conferences in which they talked about their experiences and issues.

- Students' relationships with their children changes. One group member shared a story where a parent was unable to read a teacher's note about her son but after taking native language literacy classes was able to figure out what the note was about. Her son was surprised that his mother could read and didn't consider his mother stupid anymore. Children start seeing parents' strengths and abilities. Bilingualism is promoted in the home.

- Native language literacy providers and teachers who are not from the communities of the learners can learn from their students and become involved in their communities. Working Group programs point out that ESL teachers who are working in programs that offer native language literacy instruction often comment that native language literacy makes the job of ESL teachers easier because students who have been in native language literacy classes are motivated, independent, and make quicker progress once they get to ESL.

- Some programs mentioned the value to learners of seeing printed materials in their native language for building a sense of pride in their own language.

- In many cases, a community can become empowered as students become active in community issues. For example, students at Casa Aztlán have become local school council members and board members of Casa Aztlán. In El Paso, many students are now very active in community meetings. Students at El Barrio Popular wrote a letter to a newspaper about transportation money which was due to them from the Human Resources Administration.

- Not only can an individual student progress in development of literacy but a whole group of students can develop in this respect as well. One Working Group member described, for example, how in the first issue of the Haitian Multi Service Center's magazine a teacher wrote about the native language literacy class. In the second issue, a language experience story was developed by the whole class and written up by a teacher. By the third issue, a couple of students contributed their own pieces written in Kreyol. And now, many students write their own pieces in Kreyol for the magazine.

Learner Assessment in Native Language Literacy: What Counts as Progress or Change? How Do We Know? Who Is "We"?

During the first day of the Working Group meeting, Loren McGrail, Literacy Specialist at World Education, facilitated a discussion on issues related to assessment in native language literacy. There was much interest in this topic among group members, many of whom had been able to devote little time to the development of a comprehensive assessment plan. The group asked that Loren synthesize and further describe issues that came up during the session in a section to be included in this report. She wrote the section that follows.

How do we document the development of literacy skills in the mother tongue? How can we measure the transfer of those skills to learning how to read and write in English? And most critical but not necessarily most important, who wants or needs to know this information? Practitioners? Learners? Program administrators? Funders? Do they all see progress or change in the same way? And even if they do, what evidence do they value? For example, what do improved test scores on the Spanish ABLE test mean to a learner who wants to write a letter home? What do they mean to teachers who base their instruction on learner goals, needs, and interests? Does a timed, multiple-choice standardized test tell program administrators anything about a learner's ability to succeed in an ESL classroom? Does it really tell funders anything about a learner's "educational gains" or the quality of instruction at a given program? These are just a few of the kinds of questions practitioners in native language literacy are beginning to ask. Each program must pose questions like these in order to develop some kind of framework for how they are going to assess learner progress.

The assessment framework developed by a program depends on a number of factors, including the program's philosophy, theoretical approach to language, literacy and learning, and other issues such as the sociopolitical and sociocultural context, the program model being used, and funding constraints as have been discussed. Clearly, as in all aspects of native language literacy program development, funding, or lack of it, is a central issue. If programs are not sure they are going to exist next year, why should they spend precious time developing a system of assessment? All they really have time for is improving their instructional practice and noting progress and change through observations and anecdotal accounts. Many native language literacy programs spend much of their energy either trying to secure funding for themselves or legitimizing themselves to funders. This overshadows attempts at organizing an assessment framework or system and in large part may explain why most of the programs represented by the Working Group lacked a highly developed assessment or evaluation plan.

During the Working Group meeting, participants from the various sites spent some time discussing and writing up on chart paper the kinds of tools and processes they used to assess learner progress for start-up, on-going, and end-of-cycle activities. The following sections summarize what those charts revealed and then highlight some of the innovative tools being used.

Getting Started

As might be expected, most programs have fairly developed assessment processes and tools for initial assessment. All programs use interviews for initial intake. However, it is unclear from both the charts and the site reports if the interviews were supplemented by information like language inventories (checklists or charts that ask learners to check off what they can do with literacy both inside and outside the classroom). In New York City and in some programs in Chicago, special placement tests for native language literacy have been developed. Other programs used standardized tests. Among the most popular are the California Test of Basic Skills in Spanish and the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE). These norm-referenced tests provide a grade level equivalent score. However, they were designed to be used with children rather than adults. Except for the ABLE test in Spanish, programs did not identify any other standardized tests in the native language which were designed specifically for adults. Many programs used both program-developed placement tests and standardized tests because they felt the standardized tests alone did not give them adequate information for placement. As Douglas Doua Vue says in speaking of the Lao Family Project, "We have more trust in our teacher-made instruments than in a standardized test because it is more relevant to our students' true achievement performance." All programs assess reading and writing in the native language while some assess in both English and the native language. Some of the programs seem to be using a modified whole language approach to reading assessment (comprehension questions that ask the learner to retell the story in their own words) but very few, if any, are assessing writing holistically (using a holistic rubric to analyze writing at the beginning of a program and at the end.)

For initial assessment at Casa Aztlán, potential students are asked to fill out a registration form (with name, address, phone number, social security number, etc.). Specialized staff observe this process to determine whether or not the person knows how to read and write. Afterwards, Edu-Acción staff interview the new student to establish the student profile and personal goals. When Spanish literacy instruction seems to be needed, Edu-Acción staff encourages the learner to take "clases de español" as the first step to reach his/her goals. Then, the student takes a Spanish literacy placement test designed by a group of Casa Aztlán's facilitators.

The Literacy Education Action Program at El Paso Community College has perhaps the most developed and perhaps most thorough initial assessment process (and, interestingly, one of the most stable funding bases). It is a one month goal-based assessment process that helps learners to identify their educational goals in order to continue in the program or be referred to other programs throughout the county. Then the Exploration Team will involve learners in four dimensions of literacy learning: practices, strategies and interests, perceptions and goals. (Their site report, contained in Appendix 4, describes this process in more detail.)

Ongoing Assessment

Almost all the participants in the working group identified portfolio assessment as the main tool they used to document learner progress over time. Portfolios contain samples of learner progress along with comments on the work done. Usually learners choose the work they want to see included. As a rule, teachers help students organize the information, and in collaboration with other teachers, decide on procedures for analyzing and interpreting the data (see Wrigley & Guth, 1992, p. 153). In addition to portfolio assessment, or as a piece of it, most teachers cite the importance of observation, although more discussion would be needed to clarify exactly what teachers meant by observation in this case, i.e., whether linguistic and non-linguistic changes were observed. Learner self-evaluation was not mentioned as a tool used by most programs.

El Barrio Popular Education Project, with its long-term commitment to having students and former students manage and run the program, was one program that placed great significance on both portfolio assessment and observation. In her-site report (see Appendix 4) Klaudia Rivera points out, "We feel it is important to observe in a variety of settings: in the class, students individually in small groups, in the whole group, and outside the classroom in the 'salon de bochinche', in other classes and in the community." In addition to observation, focused group discussion is used as a forum where learners can reflect on, assess, and evaluate what they are learning. Since the content of the classes is based on themes chosen by learners, these discussions provide important feedback to the teacher on her instructional approach.

End of Cycle

Due to the fact that participants did not have enough time to complete the chart it is difficult to draw any conclusions about what tools or procedures programs are using to evaluate students at the end of the cycle. Most talked about reviewing the portfolio and giving whatever test was used for initial assessment again. El Barrio also included learner testimonies as an indicator of change during the final evaluation process. Little information was provided by the sites regarding how learners might give feedback to teachers and administrators or how final evaluations are reported to funding sources and/or used for program improvement.

To conclude, what programs see as the outcomes of native language literacy instruction are shaped profoundly by their program's definition of native language literacy, as well by the kind of literacy design being implemented, the sociopolitical context, where the native language literacy program is being offered and by whom.

Currently, most programs have a fairly well developed initial assessment process though many would rather not use the standardized tests funders mandate. Ongoing assessment is strong especially in programs where a detailed portfolio system is in place. However, many programs would like to include in this portfolio system more learner self-evaluation processes and tools. It appears that the portfolio is giving the teacher a full account of written progress being made but that it is not always giving the learner that information in a format that s/he can understand or use.

In addition to more tools and processes that give learners more of a voice, native language literacy programs are searching for more formalized ways to document the anecdotal evidence they have that proves that progress is being made both inside and outside the classroom. For documenting change inside the classroom, much could be learned from looking at the way whole language teachers document their observations or keep "primary records." For keeping track of progress or success outside the classroom, learners themselves need to be asked from the beginning what they can read and write (not just what they can't). This kind of information gathering is sometimes called a language inventory and is part of the initial assessment process. It can be used as base line data to mark progress and change over time both during and at the end of a learning cycle. In addition to an inventory of the uses of literacy, an inventory that documented behavioral changes or shifts in attitudes could provide evidence of affective changes like increased self-esteem or self-confidence.

In general, native language literacy practitioners like other practitioners in adult basic education must come up with a framework for assessment that outlines which processes and tools will meet the needs of learners, teachers, program staff, and funders. Easier than all of this documentation of progress, however, is tracking student attendance and retention rates. Both have been cited by many in the working group to be true indicators of success.

And finally, the last assessment task is to figure out a way to prove that native language literacy does make the job of ESL teachers easier because "students are motivated, independent, and make quicker progress." What might work here, in addition to the kinds of documentation mentioned already, is some kind of questionnaire or survey given to ESL teachers that allows them to record examples of what motivation looks like and what constitutes quick progress.

V. Recommendations and Conclusions

As we have seen, native language literacy practitioners come from a wide diversity of settings. Each practitioner responds to the needs of a particular program setting and context through his or her own perspectives and definitions of literacy and understanding of the role of language in adult education and community development. Nevertheless, in our Working Group, there was a good deal of consensus. First, everyone acknowledged that native language literacy has only recently begun to be recognized as a "field within a field." "We really are pioneers in this," one teacher exclaimed. Second, although there were differences in approach, many group members agreed about key areas on which to concentrate to move this emerging field forward. This section summarizes issues identified during the Working Group Meeting and delineates key recommendations directed to researchers and policy makers.

Practitioner-Identified Needs

1. We need to advocate for increased funding from diverse sources, specifically directed toward native language literacy.

Practitioners in the Working Group pointed out that currently the number of programs offering native language literacy, as compared to those offering ESL literacy, is very small. In order to move the field forward, they believe it is important to find ways to encourage various funding sources—from foundations, non-governmental organizations and the business community to state and federal agencies—to set aside funds specifically for native language literacy. Many practitioners felt discouraged that many native language literacy programs in their communities had been started up, only to close down after a year or two due to lack of funding. They felt strongly that it was particularly important that dependable sources of funding be found so that programs could remain open long enough to develop high quality programs, be able to keep good teachers and assess program effectiveness. Every other issue related to research, practice, and policy in native language literacy hinges on the availability of sufficient funds for the long-term operation of programs.

2. We need to form local and national networks that can advocate for funding, program improvement and further research in native language literacy.

The group felt that working together to exchange ideas, set research and policy agendas, collaborate for curriculum development, and create public awareness was essential to strengthening the field. Given the fact that no national organization for native language literacy practitioners exists, the group decided to form a loose coalition to explore possibilities for a national organization. A committee was formed to seek funding to hold another national meeting that would involve a larger number of practitioners, teachers and learners. Some members of the group also expressed the importance of networking with other national organizations such as TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education). Others felt that while links should be made with these groups, neither of these organizations wholly represent the unique needs and interests of adult native language literacy educators. In addition to advocacy at a national level, many members felt the need to create better networks within their own communities and to link up with similar groups in other cities on an informal basis. The idea of a newsletter to share ideas was also discussed by some members.

3. We need to advocate for the involvement of members of linguistic minority communities in all aspects of native language literacy instruction.

Significant attention at the meeting was given to the role of members of linguistic minorities in native language literacy planning and instruction. Subtle but important changes in the adult education program, many members of the Working Group believed, take place when teachers are from the same culture as their students. With teachers who share their background and in an environment where the native language can be used freely, learners can develop a spirit of trust with someone who understands their immigrant experiences, their learning styles, their language, their culture, and the kinds of school systems which they attended. In addition, the teachers themselves can be role models for students. Many group members indicated that they often felt these qualities were overlooked or underestimated by U.S.-born policy makers and administrators, and that efforts needed to be made to educate ESL teachers and teacher trainers to understand the importance of these issues.

4. Issues related to the politics of linguistic diversity and language choice need to be discussed at all levels by learners within classrooms, by programs, by researchers and by policy makers.

Many programs believed that in order to be effective, native language literacy programs need to specifically address the issues of language choice in the classroom and language rights in the community. Students need to be given the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they are stigmatized within society based on their language, including discussing the various attitudes toward minority languages such as those expressed by the English Only and English Plus movements. One practitioner, however, pointed out the difficulty of having such discussions in an ESL classroom where the language can be so oversimplified that concepts become "deadened." Acquiring a deeper control of one's own language, she pointed out, leads to greater control over other kinds of understanding. Students are then able to build on their general education rather than focus on second language acquisition to the exclusion of other adult developmental processes.

5. We need to improve the quality of native language literacy instruction through better staff training and development.

All of the Working Group members believed staff development to be central to program improvement. The field, they commented, needs committed people who are paid sufficiently to allow them to stay. Programs felt a need for on-going in-service training and believed this would provide more effective service which would, in turn, mean more students were retained in the program. Practitioners were concerned, however, regarding the trend toward requiring uniform qualifications for teachers, believing that this might exclude many people from the community with good qualifications but who lacked the requisite formal requirements to teach in the field.

6. We need to create and disseminate curriculum and teacher training materials in the area of native language literacy for adults.

Working Group members were particularly disturbed by the lack of good materials available in the field. Often native language literacy classrooms take on the flavor of elementary school classrooms due to the fact that materials with adult content are not available. Members felt there was a special need for funding to collect existing materials as well as to develop and disseminate teacher-made materials. Others pointed out, however, that the lack of materials sometimes did create opportunities, describing how they have worked with learners to create their own materials and how they have used oral histories, learner-written anthologies, plays, and other student-written resources.

7. We need to explore multiple approaches to help learners to assess their progress, to help programs to improve their services, and to help policy makers to determine program effectiveness within native language literacy.

Several of the practitioners felt that, up to this point, they had little energy to devote to issues related to assessment. They had been too busy getting their programs up and running. Many were required by funders to administer standardized tests and those present expressed concern at the lack of appropriate tests available for their students. Other practitioners were just beginning to learn about alternative assessment and how they might use it in their programs. Although most Working Group members focused on assessment from the perspective of the teacher's needs to diagnose the learning gains of their students, they also acknowledged the role assessment might play in program improvement and advocacy. Many were interested in learning more about learner-centered assessment techniques such as portfolios.

8. Practitioners need to become involved in helping the research community to determine research agendas and research processes related to native language literacy.

Many of those who were practitioners said they believed that, to be effective, research in native language literacy must actively involve students. Students themselves need to provide information about what they are learning and what kind of changes have taken place in their lives as a result of native language literacy instruction. This process, they believe, also allows research to become an educational process for teachers and learners, thus building capacity in the field. They felt that researchers have an obligation to provide those they study with research tools which would allow them to use those same tools to conduct research on their own. Several mentioned the growing popularity of teacher research and its potential value to native language literacy researchers.

9. We need to promote an understanding of the role the native language can play in the learning of content area topics in adult basic education, in the acquisition of English and in other areas.

Many of the practitioners felt it important to educate ESL teachers about the potential value of using the native language in adult education in and out of ESL classrooms. Several mentioned the importance of the native language in teaching content skills such as math and science. Others brought up the fact that certain kinds of job training might take place more efficiently and effectively if offered in the native language. There is a role for the native language in the ESL classroom when discussing complex issues such as health problems, or when explaining concepts and for building cohesion as a group.

Recommendations for Research in Native Language Literacy

The following recommendations reflect discussions of the Working Group members regarding research in native language literacy:

1. We need to develop effective assessment tools and processes appropriate for measuring the linguistic and non-linguistic effects of native language literacy with adults.

As many researchers in adult literacy have noted (c.f. Wrigley & Guth, 1992) assessment of learner progress is one of the areas most in flux within the field. Not only does the lack of appropriate assessment tools and processes affect practitioners and policy makers, it also affects research. Researchers have found many standardized assessment tools are not sensitive enough to pick up incremental gains in adults who are just becoming literate. This may be particularly true for tests designed for non-native speakers of English. In addition, standardized tests for low-literate adult speakers of languages other than English do not exist. Although tests designed to be used with elementary school children are frequently used to measure literacy among Spanish speakers, for example, they were not normed or designed for this purpose. In addition, other kinds of assessment which measure learners' perceptions of how they have met their learning goals also need to be developed to allow researchers to gain a complete picture of progress of native language learners.

2. Studies are needed to examine the degree to which literacy knowledge and skills in the first language aid or impede the learning of literacy skills and knowledge in a second language.

Many of the participants in the Working Group Meeting felt that studies of the impact of native language literacy on the acquisition of English literacy were an important priority. If research of this nature demonstrated that native language literacy had a positive effect on the learning of English, they believed this information would help funding for the field. The group mentioned several considerations in designing such a study. The considerations included the need to set up comparison groups of "ESL only" and "native language literacy" at multiple sites, including classes of students representing different language groups. They suggested that such a study might start in one site and be replicated in others. They also mentioned the need to study other outcomes of literacy instruction (such as student retention and literacy usage outside the classroom) in addition to those which could be measured through standardized tests of reading, writing and oral proficiency in English. Some members of the group also expressed the hope that such a study would yield information about how much time is required for students to acquire certain basic levels of literacy and how this compares to the achievement of similar goals among students who only enroll in ESL classes. Others pointed to the fact that the diverse backgrounds and goals of adult students make the development of such bench marks problematic.

3. In addition we need to study what constitutes "success" in first and second language learning from the perspectives of learners over time.

Several participants mentioned that standardized tests alone do not provide a complete picture of what is learned through participation in native language literacy instruction. They advocated the use of teacher and student interviews, portfolio assessment, longitudinal studies of students' employment and educational histories and other kinds of ethnographic and qualitative research studies to examine the functions and uses of literacy in the daily lives of students and their children. Many pointed out the limitations of studies which only measure the impact of literacy instruction immediately following completion of the course. Others commented that informal learning processes outside the classroom should be studied. They also suggested that to gain a true picture of the impact of instruction, students need to be tracked over a period of several months or years.

4. We need to investigate student retention rates among those who initially enroll in native language literacy as compared to those who enroll in ESL.

According to anecdotal evidence provided by the teachers, one of the strongest cases for native language literacy is the low dropout rate among beginning learners, as compared to dropout rates of similar students in ESL classes. They suggested several kinds of studies related to this issue, including investigations of why students drop out of programs, why students who drop out of ESL remain in native language literacy classes and why others choose not to attend adult education classes at all.

5. We need to study programs to examine not only conditions that lead to successful native language literacy instructional programs, but also conditions that make them fail.

As one researcher pointed out, and other group members agreed, we often can learn as much from our failures as our successes. Certain program structures for native language literacy may work well while others work less well. Particular contexts and purposes may either facilitate or impede native language literacy instruction. The group agreed that studies of promising practices in the field of native language literacy need to be encouraged. Most had read a recent study by Aguirre International describing promising practices in ESL literacy (Wrigley & Guth, 1992), and commented that both the process of obtaining the data and the information itself was very useful to the field. They recommended that in future studies consideration be given to not only studying the "successes" but also to studying programs that may have closed their doors in order to determine why they were not able to continue offering services.

6. We need to determine the effectiveness of various models that combine ESL and native language literacy instruction.

Group members represented several program models in which native language literacy was combined with ESL, job training, or family literacy instruction. Some classrooms offered bilingual instruction within one setting. In other programs learners simultaneously attended native language literacy and aural/oral classes in ESL. In yet others, students started out in native language literacy and transferred to ESL once they had reached a certain threshold of literacy. Some programs offered a native language counseling component prior to enrolling JOBS participants in job training. The group felt that in studies of promising practices in the field, these various models and their usefulness in specific contexts needed to be examined.

Many were excited by the potential for participating in collaborative research studies which could be coordinated with sites in other cities and were interested in finding funding to pursue such studies.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Key areas identified for the attention of policy makers were:

Program Improvement

1. Federal, state, local and corporate funders should recognize the potential of native language literacy for improving instruction to linguistic minority adults and allocate funds for special demonstration projects so that these benefits can be explored.

2. In order to develop our knowledge and understanding of the role native language literacy can play, a diversity of programs should be funded and studied. This diversity should extend to the linguistic and cultural groups represented, the context for instruction (i.e., family education, worker education, education for community development) as well as models for instruction.

3. Funding must extend over a long enough period of time to allow programs to develop and field-test curriculum and assessment tools, in order to provide opportunities for follow-through on longitudinal studies of the impact of instruction and to disseminate the results.

Language Policy and Planning

4. Efforts should be made to include those knowledgeable in native language literacy issues in decision-making bodies that address issues related to adult education at all levels.

5. National surveys of functional literacy should measure literacy skills both in English and in key minority languages so that we can gain a more detailed picture of the overall literacy rate in the United States and better determine the educational needs of language minority adults.

6. Programs with compulsory educational requirements (such as JOBS programs serving AFDC recipients and prison programs) have a special obligation to consider native language literacy for clients with the least previous educational experience.

Research and Assessment

7. Further research is needed to understand 1) the degree to which literacy knowledge and skills in the first language aid or impede the learning of literacy skills and knowledge in a second language, 2) factors that constitute success from the perspectives of learners, and 3) the conditions necessary for programs to succeed.

8. To be effective, research in native language literacy should be accompanied by the development of evaluation measures and assessment tools that reflect the realities of native language literacy programs and are sensitive to the learning gains accomplished by language minority adults.

9. Researchers should collaborate with program administrators, teachers and learners in the development of research studies and in making decisions related to how the research can be used to support program development and improvement.

Program and Staff Development

10. In addition to a background in relevant theory and educational practice, a knowledge of students' native languages, cultures, and learning styles should be an important consideration in the qualification of adult education teachers.

11. Efforts should be made to recruit and train members of the linguistic minority communities as teachers, both for the linguistic and cultural understanding they bring to the classroom and for their capacity to act as role models for adult students.

12. Native language literacy educators need the support of policy makers and funders in their efforts to form local and national networks to share experiences, disseminate materials, develop advocacy efforts, and shape policy.

Conclusion

The purpose of the research studies in adult literacy through the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania is to expand our understanding of adult literacy, with particular emphasis on knowledge that can help practitioners improve day-to-day instruction. Our activities in the field of native language literacy have helped the field to synthesize and plan for further research and advocacy activities. In particular, the two day Working Group Meeting on Native Language Literacy was a unique and important event, bringing together practitioners and researchers from around the country for the first time, encouraging them to take an active role in determining policy and research recommendations for the field. Based on the meeting, the group decided to form a nationwide coalition represented by several different geographical areas. One of the first tasks the coalition hopes to accomplish is to seek funding for another nationwide meeting. In addition, the group hopes to produce publications and issues papers to inform foundations and policy makers of the need for funds for further research and program improvement. Native language literacy is a relatively new field within adult education. Much work lies ahead. We hope this report will contribute to moving the field forward and achieving the recommendations described.

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Appendix 1
Working Group Meeting Agenda

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28TH

9:00 Welcome (Donna Christian, CAL Vice President)
Project Overview (Marilyn Gillespie, NCAL Project Director)
Introductions of CAL Staff and Working Group Members

10:00 WHAT IS HAPPENING IN NATIVE LANGUAGE LITERACY: REPORTS FROM 6 SITES

**El Barrio Popular (Klaudia Rivera, Deidre Freeman)*
**El Paso Community College (Carol Clymer Spradling, Celia Esparza)*
**Lao Family Community, Inc. (Douglas Doua Vue)*
**Triton College (Lilia Holt)*
**Casa Aztlán (José Hunter)*
**Haitian Multi-Service Center (Marilyn St. Hilaire, Julio Midy)*

12:00 LUNCH

1:00 Writing Activity (Sharon Snyder, CAL)

1:15 THE VALUE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE LITERACY (Dan Rabideau, Literacy Assistance Center)

What is the value of native language literacy for adult learners? What are outcomes of native language literacy instruction? What factors promote or impede native language literacy instruction? Under what circumstances does it "work"?

2:45 BREAK

3:00 HOW DO WE KNOW NATIVE LANGUAGE LITERACY "WORKS" AND FOR WHOM? (Loren McGrail, World Education)

What kinds of assessment processes and tools exist in the field? What are their underlying purposes? What are their strengths and weaknesses: in improving instruction? in convincing others of the validity and legitimacy of native language literacy? in moving the field forward?

4:45 Wrap Up of Day 1

7:15 Dinner: El Caribe Restaurant, 3228 M Street, Georgetown

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29TH

9:00 WHAT DO WE NEED TO MOVE THE FIELD FORWARD? (Heide Wrigley, Aguirre International)

What do our discussions imply regarding how we can better address the needs of native language learners and programs? What recommendations can we make for further research in the field? What else is needed to move the field forward?

11:00 NEXT STEPS (Marilyn Gillespie)

What recommendations does the group have concerning the monograph to be produced as the NCAL final report? Who might participate in a possible symposium on native language literacy at TESOL? What other steps might this group take in the future?

12:00 LUNCH

1:00 The CAL meeting room can remain open up to 5 p.m. for any group members who wish to continue to meet Saturday afternoon.

Appendix 2
Working Group Members

Carol Clymer-Spradling
Celia Esparza
El Paso Community College
Literacy Education Action
P.O. Box 20500
El Paso, TX 79998

Klaudia Rivera
Deidre Freeman
El Barrio Popular
218 E. 106th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10029

Douglas Doua Vue
MACC/Lao Family Center
ESL Hmong Bilingual Prog.
1420 W. Scott Street
Milwalkee, WI 53204

Julio Midy
Marilyn St. Hilaire
Haitian Multi-Service Center
12 Bicknell Street
Dorchester, MA 02121

Heide Spruck Wrigley
Senior Research Associate
Aguirre International
411 Borel Avenue, Suite 402
San Mateo, CA 94402

Loren McGrail
Program Specialist
SABES/World Education
210 Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111

Dan Rabideau
ESL Specialist
Literacy Assistance Center
15 Dutch Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Elsa Auerbach
Associate Professor
Bilingual/ESL Studies Program
University of Massachusetts
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Eugenie Ballering
1408 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, MA 02178

Richard Duran
Associate Professor
School of Education
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Marilyn Gillespie
Senior Program Associate
Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

Fran Keenan
User Services Coordinator
National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education
1118 22nd St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

Sharon Snyder
Refugee Service Center
Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

Peggy Dean
Adult Learning Resource Center
1855 Mt. Prospect Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Aliza Becker
Traveler and Immigrant Aid
327 LaSalle, Suite 1400
Chicago, IL 60604

José Hunter
Casa Aztlán
1831 South Racine
Chicago, IL 60608

Lilia Salazar-Holst
(Triton College)
7506 Franklin Street
Apartment G
Forest Park, IL 60130

Appendix 3
Working Group Goals

Project Goals	Guiding Questions for the Working Group Meeting	Outcomes
1. To provide an opportunity for native language literacy practitioners and researchers to share information about the nature of native language literacy for adults in the U.S.	☛ What is happening in native language literacy?	
2. To identify the potential value of native language literacy for adults and their communities. What are outcomes of native language literacy? What factors promote these outcomes? What factors get in the way?	☛ Why is it valuable?	A monograph, to include an overview of the field, reports from programs, and recommendations for further research and program improvement
3. To examine the processes and tools currently used to demonstrate the outcomes of native language literacy in programs, their underlying purposes, their strengths and limitations and their value in validating and legitimizing native language literacy.	☛ How do we know it "works" and for whom?	Other outcomes may be determined by the Working Group.
4. To identify recommendations for further research and areas where additional support is needed to further the field of native language literacy.	☛ What do we need to move the field forward?	

NCAL Working Group on Native Language Literacy
August 1992, Center for Applied Linguistics

Appendix 4
Site Reports of Participating Programs

THE NATIVE LANGUAGE LITERACY PROGRAM AT CASA AZTLAN

Program Description

By José Hunter

Program Context

Casa Aztlán is a community-based organization located in the heart of Chicago's Pilsen community, serving the large Hispanic population living in the area (about 90 percent are Mexican). This center has been providing leadership and self-determination to the community through services in education, culture, youth and family since 1972.

Approximately one-fifth of the Latino immigrant population in Chicago is native language illiterate and non-English-speaking. Social, political, and civic participation presumes a literate populace. For many Pilsen residents their sense of disenfranchisement, economic instability, and lack of hope can be directly attributed to their low literacy rate. In the homes, schools and workplaces of Pilsen, illiteracy is taking a staggering toll.

Casa Aztlán's Spanish Literacy Program was developed in direct response to well-documented community needs. It seeks to provide both immediate as well as long-term solutions to Spanish and English language illiteracy in Pilsen. Its goals are to:

- facilitate native language proficiency in order to promote enhanced communication, basic skills-building, and transferability of literacy skills from Spanish to English;
- provide learning opportunities which are culturally sensitive and community-based;
- combine literacy and language instruction with life-skills building;
- offer a continuum of learning opportunities for program participants as they gain proficiency and require a more specialized curriculum;
- promote learning as a tool for gaining self-esteem as well as a sense of personal and community empowerment.

Edu-Acción, the adult education component, includes: 1) a Spanish native language and oral ESL literacy program; 2) the Parent-Child Reading Circle, a family literacy program; 3) and the Intercultural Family Literacy Project, a cross-cultural and intergenerational literacy program working with Latino and African-American families. A partnership with Richard J. Daley College's Adult Learning Skill Program (ALSP) also provides ESL, GED, and citizenship classes for adults at Casa Aztlán. Casa Aztlán had similar partnership with Travelers and Immigrants Aid to provide ESL/civics, life skills and other services for newly legalized immigrants.

Today, it is a citywide collaborative program involving the City Colleges of Chicago, the Chicago Public Library, the Hispanic Literacy Council, and the Association for Community-Based Education. In Fiscal Year 1992, 198 men and women participated in this program, the majority of whom live in census tracts 3103-3107, the area of highest concentration of poverty in Pilsen. For these individuals, it was their first classroom experience in the United States, and their point of access for other education programs and needed social services.

Casa Aztlán's educational philosophy is the empowerment of the community through leadership and self-determination. To achieve this, Edu-Acción use Freirean methodology of liberatory education, as well as life-skill and problem-posing approaches.

Besides the adult education component, Casa Aztlán offers to the community several programs and services, such as an after-school program, a leadership-youth program, and counseling for at-risk-of-high-school-drop-out youth families, among many others. Community and family support received from such kind of services makes Edu-Acción a more comprehensive literacy program.

Casa Aztlán Students

Every eight-week module, an average of 440 adults come to Casa Aztlán seeking educational services in General Educational Development (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish literacy, family literacy, and citizenship. Twelve morning classes (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and 11 evening classes (5 p.m. to 9 p.m) are held Monday to Thursday. Three of these classes, two in the morning and one in the evening, are native language literacy.

All participants are Latinos whose native language is Spanish; among them are Mexicans (90 percent), Guatemalans, Salvadorans, Hondurans, and South Americans. In the morning classes, the average age of the participants is 25, while the average evening student age is 32. Most of the morning students are unemployed and/or housekeepers. Eighty percent of the evening students are blue collar workers.

Since Casa Aztlán's adult education program was established, students have played an important role in the community and the organization itself. Students have participated in activities such as fund-raising, rallies, forums, cultural events, and cross-cultural exchanges. Some participants, as individuals, have also achieved strong leadership in the community. Students have become board members of Casa Aztlán, and two former students are currently on the Casa Aztlán staff. In the last two last school elections, seven participants ran for positions in local school councils (LSC), three of them successfully. Two former students became community organizers.

Edu-Acción Staff and Volunteers

Currently, Edu-Acción personnel is composed of a coordinator, a Parent-Child Reading Circle coordinator, an administrative assistant, a curriculum developer, and four tutors. In addition, the program works with three Training Specialists (facilitators), two tutors from Richard J. Daley College, and eight volunteer peer-tutors. Edu-Acción's staff has gained a great deal of expertise since the program started. Working as a team, staff and volunteers gather every week to share achievements, successes, concerns, failures, and frustrations, as well as to plan new activities and to discuss management of specific issues or new goals to be reached.

Some Edu-Acción staff hold degrees in Education. All teachers have at least a B.A. degree or a B.S. degree. Tutors have a high school diploma or GED diploma; some have taken college courses. One of the current staff members was a previous GED learner, and another was a GED student at Instituto del Progreso Latino, which is another CBO located at the other extreme of Pilsen. All Edu-Acción coordinators, facilitators, and tutors are Latinos; in most cases Spanish is their first language and English is their second language.

Utilizing a unique peer tutoring system, Edu-Acción recruits and trains community residents proficient in Spanish to work alongside instructors. Because they share the same linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural background as their students, the tutors have a non-judgmental, personal, non-traditional, and non-threatening teaching style.

The Neighborhood

Pilsen is one of the city's poorest communities; the majority of its 45,000 residents are severely economically and educationally disadvantaged. The average annual family income is under $14,000. Pilsen also has Chicago's highest rate of adults with no high school diploma or equivalent. Historically, Pilsen has been Chicago's "port of entry" for new immigrants, among them Bohemians, Czechoslovaks, Germans, Italians, and Latinos. Today, Pilsen is a Latino immigrant community, and Spanish is the most common language. Spanish is used for almost everything; people speak it in all businesses, stores, and restaurants. Moreover, it is the language Pilsen's families use for communication.

Eighty-five percent of Pilsen's population is Mexican, comprised of individuals who, over the last twenty-five years, have come to Chicago for economic self-sufficiency, improved access to quality education and health care, and a "better way of life" for their children. It is this quest that continues to fuel the movement of people from Mexico and other Latin American countries to the United States.

For some Latino immigrants over the years, the dream has been achieved. Today in Chicago and across the country, Latinos in great numbers are contributing to the vitality and prosperity of the United States—weaving their culture and values into our multi-ethnic fabric and thriving in their adopted homeland. For many others, however, the United States has not provided the same opportunities for success. In Chicago's Pilsen community, Latino immigrants—the newly-arrived and the undocumented—face tremendous hardship.

A Day in the Life of the Program

Even though classes are held Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Casa Aztlán's doors are open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and students—as well any one in need—come in anytime to get different kinds of services, as well as to participate in special activities and events. For instance, they may come in for a translation of a Public Aid letter or for help to fill out an application. They could be looking for legal assistance or for family counseling. They might participate in a hearing at City Hall to ask for more money for community programs or in a cultural event to celebrate *El Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead, a traditional Mexican celebration). They might attend a forum addressing domestic violence or a student party to celebrate the end of a module.

Spanish Language Literacy Component

In 1985, after assessing adult students in its ESL classes, Casa Aztlán determined that the majority of the students who dropped out did not know how read or write in their native language. Recognizing that there was little chance that English language literacy could be achieved by individuals illiterate in their native language, Casa Aztlán launched its Spanish literacy component. Since then, it has had links with the ESL/GED component. After graduation, most of the Spanish literacy students are enrolled in ESL/GED classes.

When the students come for the first time to Casa Aztlán, their main goal usually is to learn English. If assessment shows that a potential student needs Spanish literacy instruction, Edu-Acción staff strongly encourages him/her to enroll in this class. However, there are some learners who come directly asking for Spanish literacy classes. Initially, some students felt uncomfortable with their status. Culturally, being an illiterate in the Hispanic community is like having an infectious disease. Society usually blames victims instead of the causes. For that reason, Casa Aztlán does not use terms *alfabetización* and *analfabeto* ("literacy" and "illiterate"). Instead, the Spanish literacy class is called *clase de español* and its students are called *estudiantes de español*. Later on, as soon as learners start improving, bad feelings disappear. Besides Spanish language, some oral English is also provided, so students can see their efforts moving toward their main goal of learning English, and can also prepare themselves for the future second language learning process.

Recruitment and Placement

Although Casa Aztlán's educational program is well known in the community, and many people just come in looking for educational services, Edu-Acción carries out activities to reach new immigrants in the neighborhood, community residents who might benefit from services, and Latinos living in nearby neighborhoods. This outreach is done through public service announcements (PSAs), active participation in street festivals and community events, door-to-door recruitment, and presentation to several kind of Latino groups such as unions, churches, and social clubs.

Native Language Literacy Issue

Almost one fifth of Chicago's population is Hispanic and the language these people speak is Spanish, the only one for many of them. Casa Aztlán, as a community organization and as an educational entity, knows that nobody learns how to read twice. Latinos need to learn first their own language not only to continue in English as a second language, but to maintain the rich culture that comes from their background. However, few resources are available to practice native language literacy in Chicago. The City of Chicago through the Chicago Public Library, and the

State of Illinois through the Office of the Secretary of State and the Illinois Board of Education, allocate approximately $500,000 to provide literacy for more than a million Latinos in need. It is calculated that corporations and foundations award no more than $200,000 for the educational needs of Latinos. In other words, it can be said that there is only $0.70 a year for each Hispanic adult to be taught. Casa Aztlán thinks it is time for change. The Spanish language literacy issue must be addressed with many more resources. Spanish literacy providers in Chicago, especially CBOs, have had hard times lately. They are trying to convince policy makers and administrators that a portion of the resources from the 1991 National Literacy Act and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) should be spent on Spanish literacy.

Edu-Acción Spanish Literacy Instructional Materials

When the program started, Edu-Acción had to address the very first difficulty. There was a lack of instructional materials and no Spanish literacy curriculum appropriate for Latino immigrant learners. Edu-Acción has developed *El Programa de Estudios para la Alfabetización de Adultos*, which contains a Spanish literacy course syllabus and the program philosophy in addition to a Spanish literacy curriculum that includes *Nuestro Camino* (a workbook and a teacher's guide). Additional workbooks are currently being developed.

In 1988, after three years of hard work, two Spanish literacy facilitators in Casa Aztlán, Myriam González and Klirking B. Espinoza, completed the *Programa de Estudios para la Alfabetización de Adultos*. It is a Spanish language literacy syllabus sensitive to the Latino community's needs. This curriculum "...is not considered already done and forever, but it is a guide to discuss with students the way and direction their education is going to be conducted, according to their concrete interests and needs" (González and Espinoza, 1988, p.2).

The curriculum has three modules, A, B, and C, and three components, writing, reading, and math. Compared to other curricula, each module reflects two levels of basic education. Even though the curriculum development is divided and measured in weeks, "this time scheme is only a reference parameter, and the real time will depend on group achievements...and the facilitator will have to arrange the time according to the particular needs" (González and Espinoza, 1988, p. 8). So far, this curriculum has successfully worked and continues to be replicated by other community-based education providers. The next logical step will be to develop workbooks and assessment tools based on this curriculum.

Another Edu-Acción facilitator, Alejandro Ferrer, was the author of *Nuestro Camino*, a workbook for Module A and its corresponding teacher's guide. *Nuestro Camino* has 89 beautifully illustrated pages, making the learning process easy for students. Finished in 1990, this book was produced and illustrated by Lorenzo Guel, an Edu-Acción peer tutor, and edited by Jena Guel-Camp, former Edu-Acción Coordinator. In two years of working successfully with this workbook, Edu-Acción has received some feedback from learners that use it. Some revisions are scheduled to be done soon. New books for module B and C are in the process of being written. However, the monetary crisis community-based organizations and other social service centers are suffering during the present recession has delayed this important materials development.

Learner Assessment and Tools

Prior to assessment, potential students are asked to fill out a registration form (with name, address, phone, social security number, etc.). Specialized staff observes the process to determine whether or not the person knows how to read and write. Afterward, Edu-Acción staff interview the aspirant to establish the student profile and personal goals. When Spanish literacy instruction seems to be needed, Edu-Acción staff encourages the learner to take *clases de español* as the first step to reach his/her goals. Then, the student takes a placement test which, for Spanish literacy, is the Spanish Literacy Test (SLT).

The Spanish Literacy Test was developed in order to assess the students' learning skill needs upon program entrance, as well as to periodically evaluate the student's progress. It was the result of compiling expertise and opinions from all Casa Aztlán facilitators. Its author is José Hunter, Edu-Acción Coordinator, with the collaboration of Gelacio Rebolledo and Leonor Nava, two Edu-Acción peer tutors.

The SLT has 12 pages. Every two pages assess one level of basic skills. For instance, a new student will complete the two first pages. If he/she fails, he/she will be assessed under Level 1. If not, he/she will continue to pages three and four. The SLT is used every eight weeks.

Edu-Acción considers that other student goals and needs are as important as educational needs. Lack of employment, adequate health care, child care, etc. are directly related to educational disadvantage. Since the Spanish literacy component inception, Edu-Acción has been developing tools in order to assess those particular needs. Some forms have also been developed to document the progress and particular achievements of students. A file with all of these reports and assessments is opened for each student.

Conclusions

Although Casa Aztlán's Spanish literacy program has worked with almost no resources and has received only tokens from both public and private funds, it has achieved great success in quality and quantity. For seven years, it has served an average of 200 students per year. Upon completion of the last module, a large percentage of the students have passed on to ESL classes or continued studying for the GED. Moreover, some Edu-Acción students have become Casa Aztlán board members, others have run for local school council representative, and many of them have been involved individually in community issues. This success is the result of the large amount of volunteerism and dedication from Edu-Acción staff—most of them underpaid—and peer tutors, as well as the result of great effort on the part of the students.

EL BARRIO POPULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program Description

By Klaudia M. Rivera and Deidre Freeman

Program Context

El Barrio Popular Education Program is a community-based adult, native language literacy program located in one of the oldest and most vibrant Puerto Rican communities in the United States. It began in 1985 as a research project of the Language Policy Task Force of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies of The City University of New York, and in 1987 the program was incorporated as a 501 (c)(3), not-for-profit organization. Over the last six years it has grown from two literacy classes to a comprehensive community-based, adult basic education program that includes economic development activities. In January of 1991, the program moved to its own space, located on the fifth floor of what used to be a Catholic school. Prior to this move, it had been using space in another community agency.

The program has an organic relationship to the community and is rooted in the issues that affect Latinos in New York City. Our curriculum is developed in collaboration with the adult learners and aims to critically analyze and concretely respond to the issues they confront. Participants are intimately involved at the policy level as well, serving in all the decision-making bodies of the program including the Board of Directors, where they comprise half of the membership. In its pursuit of community empowerment, the curriculum integrates popular research (in which students investigate and act upon a community issue) leadership development, and economic initiatives. One of the long-term goals of the program is that it will be managed and run by students and former students; thus, at the present time 50 percent of the paid staff are also students in the program.

The educational philosophy of El Barrio Popular Education Program is based on the latest psycholinguistic research; students learn and develop literacy in Spanish, their native language. This is based on the "Common Underlying Proficiency Principle" which holds that the development of reading and academic skills in the native language is strongly related to the development of literacy and other academic skills in the second language (Cummins, 1983). Thus, one of the major program goals is for students to develop their bilingual and biliterate potential. The program also offers English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Equivalency classes (GED), leadership development, and computer instruction. In order to respond to the pressing economic needs of the community, El Barrio Popular Education Program is implementing economic development activities; presently, students are running two different worker cooperatives and are in the process of initiating a third one. Through the sewing cooperative students are running a flea market, and through a food cooperative they cater events and run a cafeteria. All the cooperatives are operated exclusively by students.

The Participants

There are 87 participants in the program. Most of the them are Puerto Rican (56 percent), but 29 percent are from the Dominican Republic, and 15 percent are from other countries in South and Central America. They are predominantly women with children and are often single parents; some of them are grandparents. Because of this, the program operates during the day when the participants' children are in school. Many of the participants receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Most of the them live in El Barrio and some live in the South Bronx, a community with sociopolitical ties to East Harlem.

The Staff

El Barrio Popular Education Program is a place where two languages are spoken, Spanish being the first language and English the second. This is reflected in the staff. As stated before, around 50 percent of the paid staff are students of the program. There are two full-time staff people—the executive director and the program assistant, who teaches a literacy class and is a former student. There are five part-time staff members. Of the two that are students in the program, one is an office assistant who also teaches a tutoring session and the other is a computer teacher. The remaining three part-time staff members have formal academic backgrounds; two of them are teachers and the other is a leadership developer.

There are a number of volunteers working in the program. Most of them are students, since student initiatives account for a variety of short- and long-term projects. Students help to teach, run tutoring sessions, or have generated special projects such as the *fotonovela*. Other volunteers who work in the program are paid staff at other organizations that collaborate with El Barrio Popular Education.

The Neighborhood

El Barrio is a vibrant community, and the program is located at the heart of it, on one of its main streets. Most people in the community are Spanish speakers and many are bilingual in Spanish and English. The community borders on Harlem to the north, the upper East side to the south, the East Harlem River to the east, and Central Park to the west. All kinds of business is conducted in Spanish, and Spanish newspapers and magazines are found throughout the community. There is an abundance of places to eat, doctor's offices, travel agencies, places to play *los números*, markets to buy *plátanos*, and banks where Spanish is the language of dominance. Spanish radio and music, as well as Spanish conversations, are the sounds of the streets.

A Day in the Life of El Barrio Popular Education Program

At 9:15 a.m., one of the students who works at the office arrives to open up the school. She is greeted by students who are anxiously waiting to get into the school. Together they climb the five flights of stairs. Her first stop is to open the cafeteria (better known as the *salón del bochinche*) where the students gather before classes. Students involved in the food cooperative prepare an urn full of strong coffee and heat the milk for the necessary *café con leche*. Those who arrive later often climb the stairs to the increasing crescendo of conversation and the aroma of coffee. By 10:00 a.m., the staff has arrived and classes begin.

Any visitor who comes to the program will find an array of classes. Some of them are formal gatherings, and some of them are informal exchanges. The new space is ample for teachers to have their own classrooms where work done by the students is displayed and used as a constant reference for the group.

There are morning and afternoon classes, and each student has a schedule tailored to his/her needs. Students have a "core-schedule" based on their literacy needs. From there, students have a range of choices based on their literacy levels, personal interests, and time available from their daily schedules. Options include getting involved in one of the cooperatives (sewing or food, at present, and computer, projected to begin this fall), tutoring sessions in math or reading, art workshops, video making, or they suggest a new project.

Between and after classes, students move between the classrooms looking for their friends or go to the cafeteria to eat, drink coffee, talk, read magazines, and give each other support. This is usually the time when the staff takes a break to share with students in a more informal way. Many ideas and projects have been born in the "*salón del bochinche.*"

The office is another hub of action, especially before and after classes. Students come with a variety of needs, from requesting help with letters to information about daycare. They bring questions about problems they are confronting in the public assistance system, as well as more personal problems.

Classes end at 2:30 p.m., when everybody picks up their children from school. No business is left to be conducted after that since students are not available. Students who live in the neighborhood sometimes come back to visit after 3:30 p.m. with their children.

Native Language Literacy Component

El Barrio Popular Education Program *is* a native language literacy program. It was founded with the commitment and the belief that Puerto Ricans in particular, and Latinos in general, have a right to be educated in the language they speak. Despite the times when their language has been suppressed in the United States, they have managed to maintain it. The classroom curriculum often reflects this belief by critically analyzing the status of the Spanish language in this society. From initial literacy, students are encouraged to write about their lives, their families, their places of origin and their experiences in this country. These writings are published by the program on an ongoing basis.

It is always a learning experience to hear the students talk about the need to be formally educated in the native language. Students talk about it when discussing past experiences in ESL classes, jobs, and/or participation in the BEGIN program (the New York welfare reform program). This need is also present in the form of curriculum materials and political discussions such as the ones that took place when Puerto Rico decided to make Spanish the official language of the island. We also talk about it at the "Student Orientation" that takes place at the beginning of every semester when "old" students talk to "new" students about the program. It also comes up in discussions about their children's education since many of the students have their children in bilingual programs and want their children to be bilingual adults. There have been many discussions about the need for Latino children to know the language of their ancestors and the role parents play in keeping it alive. Finally, when cuts were made in our educational budget, the students exercised their right to protest and demanded the services they need. Therefore, the issue of Spanish language literacy is ever-present in our program.

Currently, the program offers three levels of basic education, all in Spanish: initial literacy, post-literacy (a level between basic literacy and pre-GED), and pre-GED—all in Spanish. In addition, a GED preparation class had been offered, but has been temporarily suspended due to budget cuts. English as a Second Language (ESL) is offered, but always while furthering the participants' education in their native language.

Program Design

As stated above, the program offers three levels of basic education, from basic literacy to pre-GED. Students may attend more than one class at a given time. Clearly, the class arrangement is not static; students from different levels may work on the same projects or help each other. In addition to their core basic education class, students have a choice of getting involved in one of the cooperatives, taking a specialized "*tutoría*" focused on skills they have identified as needed, working in the computer lab, and getting involved in art classes or in a video production.

ESL is offered once students reach the pre-GED class or when they feel they are ready. The ESL class enables the students not only to learn the oral English proficiency they need to communicate, but also to transfer all that they have learned about reading and writing in their native language to English. After students complete the basic education component, they can go on to complete the GED class while they continue to be involved in other projects. All the options that are presently offered at the El Barrio Popular Education Program have been developed through a series of ongoing requests and suggestions by students and are also being implemented by students.

Recruitment and Placement

We do not have to actively recruit for the program. Most students come to us by word of mouth, since many have family and/or friends in the program. The great need for basic education in Spanish coupled with budget cuts has impacted on the program's ability to serve all interested individuals; therefore, we now have a waiting list. Due to high retention rates, the number of openings for new students are very few.

From the time that the potential student phones the program, an initial needs assessment begins. The needs and goals of the student are assessed over the telephone in order to see if the program can serve this person. For example, a person who has formal education in Spanish may call because s/he needs ESL classes. Since our program links ESL to literacy, we would refer this person to a more appropriate ESL provider. If the person needs our services, we place his/her name in the waiting list and call her/him once we have an opening.

When the student is called from the waiting list, s/he has an interview with program staff. The student is then asked to fill out a simple registration form. If the student is not able to write or read, this form is read to her/him and the form is filled out by the staff member. Subsequently, we give the student a story that s/he reads if able to read (or the story is read to her/him) followed by a question and answer discussion about the story. Once classes begin, a writing sample from every student is secured. For students in the basic literacy class this may be as simple as writing the first letter of their names if that is what they know how to do. This sample will be added to the student's folder. Other writing samples and more informal evaluations are added to the student folder throughout the year. The program has implemented this practice as another way of documenting student progress and also encouraging learner self-assessment. All of the above procedures have been initiated by the program and are not mandated by funders. In order to meet funder requirements, the CTBS or SABE in Spanish are used to assess reading and the NYS Test is used for ESL.

Since class levels are not static, a student, a teacher, or the program director can call a meeting to discuss the readiness of a student to move to a different level. These discussions usually take place at the beginning and at the end of each semester, but can also take place at any point in time during the academic year.

Instructional Materials/Methods

The literacy and ESL curriculum is community-based, student generated, and participatory. The curriculum—which is a combination of Freirean inspired methodology, popular education, and sociolinguistic research—validates the linguistic and literary practices of the community and uses materials that are generated by the students' life stories and struggles. A student story may be recorded at the computer class, printed, and then used as curriculum material. The story is then read and discussed by a group of students. Skills which are difficult for a particular group may be reinforced through activities designed around the story and the needs of the group. Finally, students are asked to write the reactions and/or experiences they may have had in relation to the topic. Other stories are then generated from the students and a new cycle begins.

The process outlined above contributes to the overall documentation of the lives of people and of the community. It also sheds light on how individual experiences are part of the larger context of community history, and how reality is collectively constructed. On the other hand, it also develops an awareness about social reality and how it affects our individual lives.

Curriculum is also generated by integrating participatory research methodologies that bridge the program to the community. Students go out into the community to research issues and participate in activities that connect the program to the community and to other organizations. The research results are recorded and analyzed and published as program materials. These materials are in turn used with other groups and a new curriculum is generated. The curriculum also includes background knowledge about history, math, geography, etc.

Another program component which is a source of curriculum and program design is the economic development initiative. As stated before, the students have conceptualized and are working in cooperatives as a way to respond to the high incidence of unemployment and underemployment in our community. The purpose of the cooperatives is to provide training, employment and revenues to the program participants and at the same time contribute to the economic development of the community. Issues such as the national economy and women's place in it, the income level of Latinos, and the purpose of worker cooperatives give shape to and are an intrinsic part of curriculum activities and workshop topics.

Methodologies are holistic, in that all four skills—reading, writing, speaking and listening—are taught in an integrated way, one reinforcing the other.

Learner Assessment

As with document procedures, there are a variety of measures used for assessing student progress. The teachers have access to or are directly involved in the placement/assessment processes. Three times a year (beginning, mid-term, and end) the students' unedited writing samples are collected in the classroom. Students are also tested biannually with the standardized tests that are mandated by the funders.

There are a variety of other means of assessment, formal and informal, that teachers use to help students identify their progress throughout the year. For example, some teachers ask students to keep folders of their work in writing, math, etc., so that students can look at the contents of the folders and assess their own progress on an on-going basis. Some teachers use informal observation as another means of assessing student progress. Student participation in different parts of the program is also part of learner assessment. We also feel that it is important to observe students in a variety of settings: in the classroom, individually, in small groups, and in the whole group; and outside the classroom, in the *salón del bochinche*, in other classes such as in the computer lab or in a *tutoría*, and also in the community. Group discussions where students reflect on, assess and evaluate what they are learning usually take place on a regular basis with the teacher in the classroom, and in group activities with the leadership developer. Since the content of the classes is based on themes chosen by the students, discussions are a key way to document (both for learners and teachers) what people know and want to know and what they have learned. Other aspects of program/student evaluations are discussed and documented through group and individual meetings with the leadership developer.

Another clear example of "progress" is also when students demonstrate their abilities by taking initiatives in their lives, in the program, and in the community. Some examples of student initiatives in the program have included the following:

- One student was at a staff meeting and suggested that we have a math tutoring session. She also volunteered to co-tutor the group.
- Another student got an idea in class and went on to conceptualize and design her own *fotonovela*. She worked with program staff and other students to produce her project which she presented at the local Adult Basic Education Conference.
- A number of students were not being reimbursed for transportation from the Human Resources Administration. Since the new welfare rules reform requires that some people on welfare either work or study, participants are reimbursed for transportation to and from school. The students took individual initiatives and visited their Welfare center to try to get the money due to them. After many frustrating visits and calls, some wrote letters. Finally, two different groups of students got together and sent a letter to a newspaper. A reporter picked up the story and came to the program to interview the students. Shortly thereafter, they were reimbursed for money that was due to them.
- Students have taken the initiative in developing a sewing cooperative, a flea market, a cafeteria in the school and a catering business.

We have also found that most of the students change their educational goals considerably from the time they first arrive in the program. Usually students arrive wanting to learn to read and write in their native language. During the course of their studies at El Barrio Popular Education Program, many decide to pursue a higher education degree once they graduate from the program.

In addition to the wide variety of formal and informal measures we use as assessment tools throughout the program, we'd like to work on building learner self-assessment into the curriculum in a more integral way. This becomes crucial since we'd also like to organize the program by projects rather than by levels. However, in order for this to become a reality, we will need funding which provides for full-time staff and teachers.

THE HAITIAN MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

Program Description

By Julio Midy and Marilyn St. Hilaire

The Haitian Multi-Service Center (HMSC)

Program Context

The Haitian Multi-Service Center is a community-based organization located in the heart of Dorchester, Boston where 80 percent of the Haitian Community of Boston lives. In addition to native language literacy and ESL instruction, the HMSC also provides several social services such as maternal and child health education, AIDS education, counseling and advocacy, document translation, bilingual child care, and refugee resettlement for Haitians from Southern Florida. The HMSC is a place where Haitians come to use the services, to learn literacy in their own language (Kreyol), and/or ESL and to socialize. It is like their second home.

The unifying philosophy of the HMSC is Haitians helping Haitians, i.e., that people, especially those from a minority culture, feel more secure and confident seeking assistance in a linguistically and culturally familiar environment. Thus, the majority of the staff is Haitian and some of the teachers were themselves previously learners at the Center.

The adult education program is guided by a participatory view in which the classes are learner-centered and the program is teacher-centered. The HMSC believes that education is most effective when it is based on providing a meaningful context and directed by the learners themselves. As a result, everything is negotiated with the students. The program helps students to identify their needs and then works with them to achieve their goals. Similarly, the HMSC gives program directors the power to make decisions in consultation with their staff. Such participation is a very important aspect of the governance of the Haitian Center because of the history of dictatorship in Haiti. (Aguirre International, 1992).

Haitian Context

In order to understand the influx of Haitians we have to understand the Haitian context. The dictatorship established in Haiti by Papa Doc Duvalier in 1957 has resulted in serious consequences for Haitians in America. Contrary to what many people think, the Haitian community here is very young. The first group to reside in Boston came in the 1950s. By the end of the 1960s when Papa Doc proclaimed himself president for life, more and more immigrants lined up at the door of the United States. From the late 1970s to the downfall of Baby Doc Duvalier on Feb 7, 1986, almost one million people left Haiti because of the political and economic situation which was and, unfortunately still is, a disaster. The Haitian population in Boston today is about 60,000. The illiteracy rate in the community is like that of Haiti, where the illiteracy rate is 80 percent.

The Learners

HMSC serves 380 Haitian students in their language and literacy classes. Overall, most of the learners are low-income and 40 percent are unemployed. Learners typically have had four to eight years of education in Haiti, and some are not literate at all. Acquiring English and becoming educated is an important but very complex goal. Most of these people are illiterate in Haitian Kreyol, their native language. Many of them have never been to school in their lives. Education in Haiti is a privilege rather than a right. In the United States, Haitians face many difficulties, such as lack of English, and lack of a green card. They are unemployed; they have family in Haiti that they are unable to take care of financially. They are people who are in shock; they have left the third world country of their birth to live in an industrialized country. They are people with a dream that cannot be achieved because of the nature of life in the United States.

Many Haitians go to the HMSC to use one of their social services and often end up in one of the adult education programs. Currently about 50 of the learners are enrolled in the Kreyol literacy class, the entry point for most students who cannot read or write or who feel that they don't belong in an ESL class where their learning ability is very limited. About 80 percent of the native language literacy students are unemployed. (Aguirre International, 1992)

The Staff

Most of the staff is Haitian, which reflects the program's philosophy. Some of the staff were previously learners at the HMSC. This experience gives these teachers a strong understanding of their students' needs and lives, enabling the teachers to present material highly relevant to their learners. Many teachers have a degree in Education either from the United States or from Haiti and some have both. Others are working to complete their BA, or high school diploma. Some of them participated in a bilingual teacher training program while others participated in the Student Literacy Corps project/courses at UMass/Boston. The teachers have a range of experience in ESL and adult education from two to twelve years; the majority of staff have been in the field and at HMSC for three to six years. The first language of the staff is Kreyol and their second language is French and/or English.

The Neighborhood

The HMSC is located in Dorchester close to Mattapan, Hyde Park, and Roxbury where the Haitian population is most concentrated and where the use of Kreyol is very extensive. Knowledge and understanding of Haitian Kreyol is sometimes highly recommended for workers in some community-based agencies serving this Haitian community. It can be the main tool for communicating and understanding the history and culture of this population in order to better serve them and identify their needs. In this neighborhood, it is often used in schools, offices, public facilities; informational materials such as documents and flyers targeting the Haitian population are often translated into Kreyol.

Native Language Literacy

Jean Marc Jean-Baptiste, the current director of the HMSC, started teaching Kreyol on his own and was later succeeded by Marjorie Delsoin. Currently there is a well established Kreyol literacy component. The native language literacy classes are designed to respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of the learners. All the teachers possess the Kreyol language, with its local cultural originality, meaning that they possess a whole explicit and expressive world brought to them by their own language. So they have all the cultural values which will be the ground for educating their students. We help the learners to master their own language which will allow them to comprehend a new language later on. By getting the basics in Kreyol they can open a new frontier, to learn a second and new language.

Sonia Joseph, a former literacy student who moved to ESL last year, explained it best when she wrote: (translated from Kreyol to English) "It took me time to overcome the traps of new surroundings and to adjust myself to this new life but I have achieved one goal which is to be able to read and write and now I can raise up my head when I go to an office, I can recognize all letters addressed to me, I can read, write, speak English a little bit." Kreyol is a strong support to ESL in the transitional classes as the language learners refer to it for further comprehension or explanation of situations. At the HMSC transitional ESL classes are where Kreyol and English are combined to initiate the students gradually to ESL—ESL that can then be explained because learners have been well equipped intellectually with the concepts of reading and writing.

Another student testified in the native language literacy class how life has been difficult for him as an illiterate, how many people have been taking advantage of his situation, how fraudulent they have been toward him especially when they know that he doesn't know the numbers. He talked about how frustrated he has been. This was an opening to a class discussion and it also raised the issue of math. After that discussion the teacher and the learners requested a math class and their request was soon fulfilled. They now have a math component especially for the native language literacy class.

Initially, there was quite some resistance from the students to the idea of going to a Kreyol literacy class, especially because most learners wanted to learn English and not Kreyol. Another reason for resisting learning Haitian Kreyol is the marginality of the Kreyol language. People consider themselves more "social" when they reject Kreyol. We dealt with this issue by discussing this resistance towards Kreyol in an open meeting at the HMSC. The negative attitudes towards Kreyol were discussed; everybody, the staff and the students, agreed that learning Kreyol has linguistic, sociopolitical and sociocultural value. For some Haitians today, learning Haitian Kreyol however, is still not a primary concern because economic and political issues take precedence.

Recruitment and Placement

The recruitment of students is not problematic at all because the program offers a wide range of services to the Haitian community and the adult education program is well known. However this causes long waiting lists and classes are overflowing especially with the arrival of the refugees from Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

The initial reading and writing assessment is done in two languages, French and English, because if students had some education in Haiti, the language of instruction was French. The oral interview is done in either Kreyol or English. The learners who are unable to read or write or do so with great difficulty are placed in the Kreyol literacy class. However students learn quickly that by physically coming to the HMSC they may be placed in classes more quickly. Some clever students figure out where the empty spaces are and act according that level to get in. That placement may be often too low. The teacher therefore might discover quickly that a student's placement needs to be adjusted.

Instructional Materials and Methods

In our classes we follow a participatory curriculum development process focusing on learners' issues. The teaching of native language literacy is primarily a social phenomena and the best way for us is to work together with students and find out what is happening in their lives, what is important to them, and what they need literacy for. By creating social bonds and helping consolidate participation in the classroom, the learners describe and understand their own issues and objectives.

The content of our native language literacy component is related to what happens in students' lives. Personal experiences bring the teachers curriculum materials which develop thinking in our learners and provides a basis for literacy work and class discussions. Students bring many issues into the classrooms, because our teaching is in contact with the learner's life. We do connect literacy to social life. Our language and literacy work includes social analysis and skills development.

We do problem-posing activities through codes where teachers structure the discussion so that students are able to describe, identify, recognize, analyze, and take action on a problem. Students have to come up with their own ways of addressing the problem. Examples of codes are pictures, key words, and students' writings. The use of *key words* is very helpful. They can be taken out of stories and they can be put back into meaningful sentences. They help us to discuss important issues and new ideas can be generated around them. One day students were forming words and came up with the word "war." They brought up a discussion about the word and what they thought about war. Then they discussed the Persian Gulf War. They further developed a story around that word which was used later for grammar exercises and related questions. The use of *pictures* is another way to start with a discussion followed by literacy work.

Writing is an important part of our curriculum. Once one teacher started with showing the learners a picture and they had an extensive discussion about this. This exercise resulted in learners writing their own story and developing a *fotonovela* out of it. Learners have a lot to say; the teachers help the students to get their thoughts on paper so that they can explore the language more deeply. For example, we started to discuss the calendar one day and we ended up linking the calendar work with the learners' lives by asking them their wedding dates, their birthdays, etc. If the learners are engaged in a discussion, we can ask some clarifying questions and ask them if they want to write their ideas. We also develop materials from students' stories: Teachers and students complete stories and follow up with language activities such as grammar exercises and formulating and answering questions. Often teachers do *language experience stories* and correct errors together afterwards. *Stories* can be developed, can be edited for content and mechanics, and we can generate curriculum around them. The introduction of *dialogue journals* has been really successful in the classroom. The focus in the dialogue journals is not on the form but on the content. The stories have been very powerful and a good vehicle for communication between teachers and learners. We also use the issues from the journals for class discussion and do literacy work at the same time. The journals can also be used as tools of evaluation, a way of documenting students' progress.

We also use literacy texts such as: *Goute Sel* and *Appran Li* because students often like to use a book as a guide. We use a *proverb book* developed by Tom Macdonald, an ESL teacher, which has been corrected and extended with interns and students' input, newspaper articles, and writings from HMSC's students' magazine where the participation of Kreyol literacy students is considerable.

At first, students did not understand this participatory approach but they have come to deal with it and are now also focusing on the more abstract concepts of reading and writing. They are looking forward to moving to an ESL or transitional ESL class. The instructional methods used no longer look unexpected, illogical or inappropriate to the students who can now participate without anxiety in a class discussion.

Our Study Center prepares a Center Magazine which appears during each cycle of classes, three times per year, and to which students submit their writing.

Learner Assessment

In order to do good learner assessment and evaluation, teachers have to make learning a positive experience for the students. For example, positive feedback from the teacher and other learners increases a student's confidence in learning English. The supportive and encouraging atmosphere of the classroom also facilitates student progress. We emphasize the importance of the relationship between the teacher and learner. In many cases, the student may be older than the teacher. The teacher must be able to somehow make the learner feel comfortable and equal to him/her. The learner must also be able to feel confident about his/her ability to succeed academically. A learner's comfort level can be increased by finding "common ground" with the teachers. Teachers must not be afraid to discuss situations they may have in common with a learner. The teacher should use positive examples of other learners who have progressed in the program.

Once the learners are in class, the teachers use classroom observation and classroom attendance to document learners' progress. Also, other learners' reactions are used as a method to assess a student's progress. On many occasions, other students will comment on someone's class participation. If their comments are positive, they may say things like "you are too good for this class, you should move up." We do not have a standardized tool of relating students' progress, or measuring students' performance. But we are able to see the changes by observing the way they participate in class, their interaction in the classroom, and also by student self-evaluation. Some teachers keep a folder and collect the work of students so they can demonstrate their progress.

What is interesting is how reliable our techniques are. We are interested in the process of development and progress of students' literacy in their first language and seeing how this literacy influences their learning capacity. We cannot be specific by saying that students might become independent readers and writers in one or two years. We think that it depends on the individual and his or her life situation and priorities. What is important is that the student first recognizes the nature of being illiterate and then sees the need to learn native language literacy first. Then the learners have to become independent in the native language literacy class and they have to formulate their own goals. After succeeding in the native language literacy class they have the option of moving to a transitional class. After that the learners have a chance to be selected to participate in an ESL class where there is still a strong link with Haitian Kreyol.

Sometimes we encounter situations when a student resists moving to ESL classes, like the case of Celecia Rocher, a literacy student who refused to move to an ESL class. Then Tom, the ESL teacher related the case to the other learners and had his whole class talking to Celecia. They talked about their experiences and how helpful and important it will be for her to move and they encouraged her. She is now doing fine in her classroom and is well know for her active participation in class.

EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE LITERACY EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAM

Program Description

By Carol Clymer-Spradling and Celia Esparza

Program Context

The philosophy of the Literacy Education Action program is based on a holistic approach to education. LEA strives to use the students' life experiences as the basis for instruction. The programs are designed to help adult learners become full participants in their community. This means that LEA provides instruction based on learners' needs, goals, interests, and concerns and links that instruction to community realities. Thus, students build on their prior knowledge and integrate it into the development of basic reading, writing, listening, speaking, thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The Literacy Education Action program was established in the fall of 1985. At the time, a member of the English faculty was released from full-time teaching responsibilities to coordinate the program and worked with faculty members from the reading, sociology, and ESL disciplines to implement the plan of action for the program.

During 1985 and 1986, LEA concentrated on developing its own literacy tutoring program, including recruiting and training volunteer tutors and recruiting community members with reading skills below the sixth grade. Using the Language Experience Approach and the Five-Step Model teaching approach, instructors provide assistance for English speakers, Spanish speakers, and bilingual individuals. In the fall of 1986, LEA opened the Literacy Center at the Rio Grande Campus of El Paso Community College. By 1987, LEA was fully institutionalized at EPCC with a full-time director and with the Center as the hub of all LEA activities.

In 1992, LEA remains committed to providing free basic literacy instruction to educationally disadvantaged adult residents of El Paso County. The program is committed to working jointly with other community initiatives to fully address the educational needs of adults who have difficulty with basic reading and writing tasks. The program is committed to exploring all options to address adult illiteracy, including family literacy, workplace literacy, and the use of technology in literacy education. LEA provides necessary support service linkages to help ensure that external family, personal or health concerns do not halt literacy students' pursuits of education. In addition, the program works with literacy students to ensure their successful matriculation into more advanced educational/vocational programs.

The Learners

LEA serves approximately 1,500 students annually. Of these students, 95 percent are native Spanish speakers. The remaining 5 percent are English speakers. This information reflects the following data gathered from the 1990 U.S. Census.

El Paso, a border city adjacent to the city of Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, has a population of 515,342, of which 69 percent are Hispanic. Of the 95 percent Hispanic students attending classes at LEA, approximately 85 percent are immigrants from Mexico. These immigrants have varied levels of educational attainment. Some of them may have attended school up to six years, while others did not have the opportunity to attend due to their economic status and/or traditional, cultural beliefs.

Because of the lack of opportunities in their educational history, these students are now seeking further education in our program. They have found that without good basic literacy skills they are unable to survive in their adopted country. Students coming in for services appear to have low self-esteem and few set goals, with minimal survival and life skills outside of their neighborhood. In spite of these disadvantages, they still exhibit a desire to learn. When asked why they want to learn to read, students express the need to be able to help their children with their homework, to communicate with their children's teachers, and to fill out employment application forms.

LEA Staff

To administer LEA programs, there are a full-time director, two coordinators, a vocational education literacy liaison, and an information coordinator. The remaining staff consists of nine instructional facilitators who oversee a designated instructional/service area and serve as role models for students learning a second language. Fourteen tutors assist facilitators in delivering daily instructional activities of LEA.

Native Language Literacy

LEA's experience in referring students to EPCC's ESOL programs led to the development of a Spanish Literacy Instructional component for LEA. Observations revealed that students having low native language literacy skills had a more difficult time acquiring a second language. In addition, referrals from the ESOL program to LEA indicated that some students could not pass the entrance exam or succeed in credit classes because they lacked basic native language skills. Furthermore, although these students were able to pass the Spanish ABLE test to receive financial aid, they were still lacking the basic literacy skills required for succeeding in an ESOL classroom environment. Therefore, the staff created a special Spanish language component. The program includes initial exploration/assessment and orientation, Spanish literacy group instruction, and a transitional program called Advancement. In these three programs, the staff strives to help the students develop the behaviors involved in becoming a successful vocational student. In some ways, it becomes a functional context for developing Spanish literacy. The staff has found that students who do not go through the entire system do not fare as well as students who have gone through all phases of the program.

Recruitment and Placement

In order to place students in a Spanish class, instructors inquire about their previous school background using the following questions:

1. How many years of formal education in Mexico did you have?
2. How long has it been since you last attended an educational program?

Some additional questions to determine language dominance and preference follow:

1. What language do you speak with your spouse, friends, or relatives?
2. What language do your children speak to you?
3. What language do your children speak among themselves?
4. What language do you prefer for instruction?

Those students who never attended school in Mexico are placed directly into a Spanish literacy class. Some students realize they are so lacking in literacy skills that they request placement in a Spanish class. Another criterion for placement into a Spanish literacy class is a review of unedited writing samples. During this process, we check for paragraph structure, thought processes, creativity, and handwriting.

Some students believe that in order to learn the English language, they must have initial and total instruction in English. When this occurs, the student is counseled and informed of the advantages of developing native language skills to facilitate acquisition of the second language.

Instructional Materials/Methods

Individuals desiring to learn to read and write to improve their literacy skills in order to pursue a vocational-educational goal are guided through the following process:

Intake assists prospective students by providing them information about the requirements for enrollment and services provided. During Intake, there are options for new and returning students. They are screened and assessed for either placement into an Exploration class, referral to EPCC credit courses, or referral to outside agencies. Initial screening is used to determine if the student qualifies for the program. From the initial evaluation, staff members observe verbal language dominance, independent writing skills, and fluency and clarity in completing forms. If a student has had over six years of education and enough information is gathered to determine that the student's reading level is above the sixth grade in his or her native language, then an instant referral to EPCC programs or an outside agency is made.

Exploration is a self-empowerment, goal-based assessment process that provides literacy students extended opportunities to express themselves in a variety of verbal and written formats. Students' prior knowledge is constantly activated to help learners realize that their life experiences count educationally and to help them learn how to build upon what they already know. During Exploration, instructors try to get learners to look introspectively at perceptions, attitudes, and values related to learning and to think critically about their goals and the barriers that may keep them from achieving those goals. New and/or returning students also work on developing self-esteem and setting short and long-term educational goals. Exploration is an open-entry program. Classes meet four days a week, three hours a day, for two weeks for a total of twenty-four hours.

Placement of the student in a proper area or program is conducted after Exploration. Exploration leaders compile information such as writing samples, observation reports, and structured writing activities, from each student while in Exploration. During Placement, each student's portfolio of assessment activities is evaluated by staff. Placement decisions are made by a group who looks at how students performed on oral, aural, reading, writing, and math activities; what their perceptions of learning are; what strategies they use to learn; and their educational histories.

Self-Paced Lab is a supplemental service area that offers students the opportunity to acquire basic computer literacy skills and to improve their reading and writing skills in both English and Spanish. Also available are recorded library books and audio/video equipment for instructional purposes. Students must be enrolled in one of the instructional service areas in order to participate in the Self-Paced Lab. Self-Paced Labs are available at two EPCC campuses, Rio Grande and Valle Verde.

Advancement is a transitional program designed for students who have acquired basic literacy skills through LEA and want to enroll in a vocational education program. Some topics covered are study skills, improving test taking skills, and setting goals. In addition, students are assisted with financial aid, and taken through the college system to prepare for enrollment.

Counseling and referral services include assistance in obtaining day care, transportation, eye examination, eye glasses, housing, financial aid, funds for rent and utility bills, and personal counseling. LEA works closely with outside agencies for such referrals. These agencies include Private Industry Council, Department of Human Services, Mary L. Peyton Foundation, LULAC, YWCA, Project Bravo, El Paso County Legal Aid, and Life Management Center, a mental health and mental retardation program.

Learner Assessment

Although literacy programs differ from one another, they share a common concern in assessing learners. Many programs are required to assess learners for funding or accountability purposes. In most cases, programs administer standardized tests which have been modified or adapted from those designed for school-age children. This was the case in LEA's program until it was decided that these tests do not reflect such important program areas as learners' goals, life experience, community involvement, and culture.

As the program developed new instructional strategies, it became evident that there was a need to identify alternative assessment procedures that were more compatible with the curriculum design. In attempting to find an assessment instrument that was compatible and comparable to their nontraditional instructional methodology, LEA moved toward a more qualitative type of assessment. Rather than focus on a student's deficits and concentrate on what the student *does not* know, the program developed an alternative form of assessment to reflect the needs of the community, based on each student's literacy practices, strategies, interests, perceptions, and goals.

As community-based educators, the LEA staff developed an alternative form of assessment that reflects a sociocultural view of literacy and learning. Individuals and groups vary in their purposes for reading and writing. Literacy becomes a range of practices or activities so that each person's literacy is by definition unique and dynamic. This program's approach to assessment is learner-centered with the underlying assumption that the adult learner brings vast knowledge via life experiences, skills and talents. Thus, for the program, assessing literacy as practice means *exploring* the particular types of reading and writing that adults regard as meaningful, and it reflects learners' own purposes and aspirations. Assessment in this participatory approach is built on several assumptions: adults come to programs with particular goals, with previous experiences with literacy, and with perceptions of reading, writing, and education.

On-going Assessment

One of the major tools for on-going assessment is the student portfolio. A portfolio is completed for each student every session. It is used to evaluate students at the beginning of the session, in the middle, and at the end. Three unedited writing samples are collected in order to evaluate their writing ability, along with a literacy behavior profile. Through observation, a very important tool for on-going assessment, the staff can tell if the student has gained self-esteem. Tutors are trained to closely monitor their students in order to pinpoint areas where improvement is needed. A second method of assessment is the daily journal. This activity allows instructors to build a strong rapport with the student and is a key factor in determining the student's progress. Finally, another form of assessment is testimonials, which help determine if students are applying what they learn in class. It can also help ascertain program implementation and effectiveness.

Instructional Method

I. Initial Inquiry

The instructor begins the class by modeling appropriate language behaviors such as questioning, expanding, reinforcing and praising while speaking with the students. Each participant is encouraged to share in the discussion no matter how limited his/her contribution is to the topic. While open-ended questioning is more appropriate in the development of language and communication skills, this is often difficult to implement initially with some students. In this case, the objective is still to enhance language participation and close-ended questions can be used. As the students develop good rapport and feel comfortable with the instructor and the setting, the open-ended questioning becomes a natural part of the initial inquiry step. During the initial inquiry, vocabulary words are written on the chalkboard and are discussed and used in context so students can see the relationship between spoken and written words and real-life activities. Students are encouraged to write the words in their notebooks.

II. Learning Activity

Upon completion of the oral language activity, the instructor engages the class in a concrete, hands-on learning activity. This activity, facilitated by the instructor, varies according to the content of the subject. It is designed to expand the student's facility with the English language through awareness of language patterns and structure and to develop effective skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

III. Language Experience

Following the hands-on, concrete learning activity, a language experience activity is used to develop comprehension and teach word recognition through context. This approach involves using the students' knowledge of oral language to teach printed language. The language experience story expressed in the student's own words may be an account of a personal experience, a retelling of a news item, or an opinion on an item of public interest. It may be a summary of a magazine article or a comment on an excerpt from a novel or textbook. Anything of interest to the student may be used as the topic for the language experience activity.

IV. Reading in Context

Following the language experience activity, the instructor reads an appropriate book, story, or article that relates to the day's theme. During the oral reading, the instructor can improve difficulties with comprehension by incorporating "metacognitive" techniques that encourage the students to monitor their thought processes while reading. It has been found that poor readers tend to lack a clear picture of the purpose of reading. Metacognition is not necessarily the ability to understand what is being read, but rather knowledge of whether the student is understanding what is read. In teaching students to monitor their thought processes while reading, it is important to focus on their ability to understand "how to use" metacognitive processes and not just on teaching them "about" metacognitive processes.

V. Home Assignment

Before the participants leave the class, the instructor assigns an activity for them to do at home to continue skill-building throughout the week. This assignment attempts to enable students to apply what they have learned in class. Students are also encouraged to set aside a particular time each day for the entire household to read and study together. It is important to encourage adult students to provide a model of literacy behavior to younger household members and to establish a home environment conducive to literacy acquisition and scholarly activity.

Curriculum Development

The learner-centered curriculum is designed to help students become full participants in their learning. There are several steps taken in order to develop the lessons. During the first two weeks of instruction, tutors guide students in each class through a brainstorming session to pinpoint topics for discussion. Students are asked to think about concerns that they may have in their communities—locally, nationally, internationally—or simply something they have always been interested in learning about. Some of the topics that have been covered are:

- health
- social diseases
- respect
- communication
- cholera
- television and how it affects the family
- environmental issues
- home remedies

Themes are written on the chalkboard by the tutors and students copy them. They then choose at least ten topics for lesson development. Even at this point, students exhibit great interest in giving their opinions on selecting which specific topics should be covered and which aspects are more important. The decision to choose the themes that will be developed and the order they should be presented is made democratically by the students.

Next, tutors meet as a group with the instructional facilitator to develop the lessons using the five-step model previously mentioned. Sometimes tutor writings are used for the reading-in-context portion of the lesson. This procedure has helped the tutors become "human" to their students. Usually, students have the tendency to view tutors as experts who never make mistakes and have not been through any hardships. When they come across a reading about a tutor who went through the process of a divorce, went back to school, got a job, and supported her three children, and it has a tutor's name at the end, the tutor becomes a role model and a wonderful source of incentive for the student. In addition to outside readings and tutor writings, past student writings serve as reading material for instruction.

Many of the topics seem to have a mushroom effect. For example, the topic of health was expanded into other areas such as the male and female reproductive systems, the human body, AIDS, and cholera. Students also keep astounding their instructors by going deeper into the topics. For example, when a lesson on respect was developed, it was assumed that the students would discuss respect for one's fellow man, family, classmates, siblings, and co-workers. Surprisingly, however, students talked about topics such as respect for the U.S. flag, the environment, animals, and human rights.

The LEA program also implemented some "deliberate" lessons; that is, lessons that were not chosen by the students. It is their belief that the students sometimes need help in other areas such as self-esteem, goal setting, and career development, yet they will not self-identify these areas.

A positive aspect about students choosing curriculum topics relates to relevance and meaning for the students. There is nothing more reassuring than when a student remarks that s/he has decided to go on a diet or has stopped smoking as a result of a health lesson. One lesson on self-expression led a student to discover that she possessed the ability to write poetry. Still other students comment that they have been able to speak to their children's teachers without use of an interpreter.

Through this learner-centered curriculum development process, students make discoveries about themselves and begin to take risks. For example, when writing, some students have found that they too can be authors. After they have written a story or a poem and after they have edited it in a group, it is typed and an illustration is added using graphics from the computer or the students' own drawings. Several students' writings were submitted to Literacy Volunteers of New York's *New Writers Voices* and were subsequently published.

Conclusion

In designing the native language literacy program, the staff has strived to integrate the most current research on literacy acquisition for adults. Simultaneously, they have attempted to enable the learner to engineer his/her own educational path. LEA has been committed to providing an instructionally sound program, and equally so a humanistically sensitive program. Thus, they will continue to offer a learner-centered program where learners can explore their own potentials.

TRITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Program Description

By Lilia Salazar-Holst

The Program Context

Triton College is located in River Grove in suburban Chicago, Illinois, in a basically Italian area. It is surrounded by several communities in which the Hispanic population has increased 50 percent during the last five years. The predominant language on campus is English; few people speak Spanish.

Organization

Triton's programs are divided into six areas: (1) Arts and Sciences, (2) Nursing, Allied Health, and Public Service Careers, (3) Business, (4) Technology (5) Academic Support Programs, and (6) Adult Continuing Education. The first four offer credit classes and the last two offer special adult education and non-credit courses. The Spanish Literacy Program, "Escribir y Leer es Poder," is part of the Adult Continuing Education Area of Triton Community College.

Triton College also has a community center, New Horizons (Nuevos Horizontes), settled in School District 504. It is strategically located in Melrose Park, accessible to the largest concentration of Hispanic and minority students. In this area everybody is bilingual, and the predominant language is Spanish.

Until October 1992, the Spanish Literacy Program had group sessions on Monday in two locations, the morning session at the main campus and the evening session at Nuevos Horizontes.

Early in October 1992 the Spanish Literacy office and sessions were relocated to Triton's Community Center, "Nuevos Horizontes." The Spanish Literacy Coordinator feels that this is a major improvement because the program will be more integrated into the Hispanic community.

The program's philosophy is to help everyone who comes to reach her or his goals. After a friendly interview and a test, a person can become a student of the Spanish Literacy program or can be referred to another program. The program's educational philosophy is to give students the necessary skills to learn another language and to understand the society in which they live.

The Learners

Of 52 Spanish literacy students, 48 come from rural areas of Mexico and four from other countries. The students who come from rural areas have faced many constraints regarding their education in their own country. For example, the Mexican government, by law, should provide free, or low cost, education at all levels, from elementary to university. But to provide this service countrywide, the government needs money to develop a curriculum, to publish text books, to pay teachers, to build schools, etc. The government lacks the resources to pay for these expenses. And, if they have money, they spend it on the educational system in the urban areas. So the schools in the rural areas, located far away from the main cities, suffer the most and as a result, offer a deficient education. Thus the majority of Spanish literacy students did not receive a proper education in their own country. Also, many of them did not attend school at all because they, as children, had to work to help support the rest of the family. Nearly 40 percent of the ESL students did not complete elementary school in their own country. During last fiscal year, 1991-1992, 52 students were tested, but only 25 were served. The rest could not be served because there were only eight volunteer tutors for the whole year. In FY'93, 12 students and five volunteer tutors attended the Fall first day group session.

Half of the participants are women. They work in factories, restaurants, hospitals, churches, or are on public aid. The age range is between 30 and 60. Students' only role in the program is to study. Sometimes they come to the classroom 15 minutes earlier, but they cannot give more time because they work. At the end of the morning session, they have to leave quickly because they just have time to eat and go to work. The evening session starts at 6:00 p.m. Usually, students stop by their homes, have a quick dinner and come to Nuevos Horizontes. When the session is over at 9:00 p.m. they want to get home as soon as possible. Some of them are housewives and they have to take care of other duties. Male students sometimes stay a couple of minutes if they have questions, but they also want to get home to rest after a long day of work.

Staff

The Spanish Literacy Program is a small part of the Secretary of State Grant which supports the Access to Literacy program, which teaches English literacy. This grant has a coordinator for English literacy, a recruiter, and a secretary. The position of Spanish literacy program coordinator has been paid through another grant but she works in the same office as the Access to Literacy program and shares a secretary with the other coordinator and the director.

The Spanish Literacy coordinator is the only paid staff member of the Spanish Literacy Program. The other staff are volunteer tutors. Most tutors are Hispanic and study at the Community College. There are two North American tutors whose first language is English. Their experience was successful; although Spanish was their second language, the students felt comfortable. For the Fall semester, publicity for tutor recruitment was made through the University's Spanish department, as well as newspaper and community ads.

The role of the volunteers is basically to teach students, but they also give input on materials, teaching methodologies, and any area of benefit to the program and the community. As Spanish literacy coordinator, I invite them to attend conferences in Spanish literacy so that they can improve their knowledge and techniques. But unfortunately, we are unable to reimburse their conference fees.

The Neighborhood

A day in the life of "Escribir y Leer es Poder"

Students, tutors and coordinator meet in Room 314 at Triton's Library. We always start the class by talking about relevant news, questions about their ESL class or personal issues. The morning sessions are calm; there are three students and one tutor. After our informal chatting, we start distributing copies of exercises to the students. The tutor's role is to help students to solve the exercises. If the student is at the beginning reading and writing level, the tutor will coach that activity with suggestions, dictation, reading improvement exercises, explanation of words, etc.

At 6:00 p.m., students, tutors and coordinator meet at Nuevos Horizontes to start the evening session. This session is a little more complicated because there are ten students and three tutors. The procedure is the same; students of the same level are grouped with the tutors. If the students are part of the second level, they could start by reading a newspaper article, discussing it and then trying to write their opinions about it. Based on that writing the tutor starts talking about grammar concepts, at the same time making corrections. Then the student rewrites the composition.

We also have a 15-minute break, sometimes more, in which everybody talks about their personal problems or job concerns. As Spanish literacy coordinator, I have tried to feed an atmosphere of friendship and help.

Native Language Literacy (NLL) Component

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) department saw a growing number of non-native English speakers with no or low educational skills repeating the first two levels of ESL two or four times. Also the number of enrolled ESL and GED students has grown, partially due to the high percentage of repeating students. The ABE department started a Spanish Literacy program before 1991 but it wasn't very successful.

In May 1991, I was hired, on an hourly basis (30 hours a week), to develop a Spanish Literacy Program. With really no experience in this field, without knowing who the students were, and with a limited bibliography of Spanish instructional material, I started. My primary objective was to identify the needs of the students, and to check the textbooks for the first two ESL levels. I talked with ESL instructors and found out what the requirements of their courses were:

- Reading and writing skills
- Basic knowledge of Spanish grammar

I also interviewed and tested target students to obtain their personal needs. The results were:

- No reading or writing skills
- Low reading and/or writing skills
- Inability to distinguish alphabet sounds
- Writing omission of alphabet letters
- Change of words while reading
- Lack of numbers knowledge
- Lack of basic knowledge of Spanish grammar
- Lack of writing essays (compositions) skills

Program Design

My next step was to design adequate levels for these students.

Goals and objectives

The first goal for the two literacy levels was to give the target students the skills to learn English. For this purpose, two kinds of students were considered—totally illiterate and those with low reading, writing, and grammar skills. Then, the program was divided in two levels.

Objectives for the first level:

*Identify alphabet, vowels, consonants, and sounds.
*Read and write information about others
*Read and write others information
*Fill out simple forms
*Read adds, short newspaper articles and magazines
*Write short messages
*Identify numbers

Objectives for the second level:

*Identify grammar concepts
*Read stories from newspapers, magazines, or books
*Encourage written self-expression
*Read and answer messages
*Fill out applications (jobs, credit, savings or checking accounts)
*Learn to use a dictionary, the Yellow Pages, a map, the library
*Foster the reading habit

Other objectives for the Spanish Literacy Program were:

*Develop a tutors' manual
*Compile an exercise booklet for one-on-one tutor session

Due to grant restrictions, there are no formal classes. Group sessions were implemented because of the shortage of volunteer tutors. The way these group sessions work is the following: Students and tutors attend the classroom, students are divided into small groups, according to their skills and depending on the number of tutors, then students and tutors start checking questions from homework or working on a new assignment. If the tutor's attendance is consistent, s/he will meet with the same students; if not, the tutor will be floating around the room helping the less advanced students.

Native Language Literacy Issue

I feel that the Spanish Literacy Program at Triton College has been an important step in the right direction because people have realized that there is a real need for Spanish literacy. Many people need this step to move forward in their education. In the past some ESL students could ridicule Spanish literacy students. For instance they would say, "Why are you studying Spanish when you need to learn English?" Some teachers and students simply couldn't comprehend that there are people who did not have the opportunity to attend school in their own country and that they cannot learn another language if they don't know their own language. They just laugh at them and make them feel dumb.

Two group sessions were implemented the first week of January, 1992. These group sessions run Monday morning and Monday evening for three hours during six weeks. We faced many difficulties because there were students from different levels in the same group. Also, there was only one person handling both sessions in the Spring semester.

The summer group sessions improved. There were tutors and students working under one person's supervision. This really worked out. This Fall is our second semester together; now everyone feels more confident and relaxed. They talk more about themselves, their jobs, their opinions, about everything. I feel they are not afraid anymore.

Instructional Materials and Methods

The tutors and I try to link our group sessions with the English classes. Even though the student's need is our main concern we also try to build a bridge to English and to mainly focus on oral English.

Recruitment and Placement

Student recruitment has been done through ESL classes and through flyers given out at the Hispano-Fest in the Nuevos Horizontes area. To place students in a literacy level, Peggy Dean's placement test (Prueba de Habilidad) has been used. Approximately 70 students have been tested so far for the fall session, but we were unable to serve all of them.

Achievements

I can say that the program is progressing. Students are coming from all over Triton's area, and according to their statements, they feel that this program is helping them.

This is the first semester that I moved three students to an upper level, Basic Skills. This course is considered preparation for studying for the GED. The curriculum includes grammar rules and involves more operations with whole numbers and word problems.

I produced a Tutor's Manual and the curriculum for each level. Also with Peggy Dean's valuable collaboration and orientation, a booklet of exercises was compiled.

The Tutors' Manual helps tutors know some of the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of adult students. It gives some suggestions and techniques to prepare and to teach the class.

Constraints

Tutor recruitment hasn't been very successful; in 11 months just 20 tutors, who are mostly ESL students from the community, have been recruited. Most of them are not available anymore. Our tutor sessions did not work out. The reasons could be that people prefer to spend their time on a job, earning more money; the tutors' shifts are continuously changing, causing inconsistent attendance; or that they don't have the ability or patience to tutor.

Another constraint is the lack of Spanish instructional material. Sometimes adapting English material is not very effective. However, I would like to develop a booklet of exercises using other country's literacy books, songs, and popular sayings.

Future Plans

Some of the most relevant goals for next 1993 fiscal year:

- To expand Spanish literacy service to other communities within Triton's district
- To recruit volunteer tutors from among university-level advanced Spanish language students
- To collect Spanish material to develop an exercises booklet
- To extend programs to Spanish Family Literacy
- To improve the Tutor's Manual

LAO FAMILY COMMUNITY, INC. AND MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE (MATC) COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION

LAO FAMILY/MATC BASIC SKILLS ESL & HMONG BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Program Description

By Douglas Doua Vue

Hmong Context in Wisconsin

Milwaukee is one of the largest and most ethnically diverse cities in Wisconsin. The first few immigrant groups that came to Milwaukee were the Germans, Norwegians, Slovenians, Croats, Russians, and Ukrainians. In the late 1950s, large numbers of Hispanic immigrants arrived, followed in the mid 1970s by Southeast Asians. While Southeast Asian immigrants settled throughout the state, many have come to reside in Milwaukee. At the present time 6,225 Hmong—19 percent of the state total population of 32,194 Hmong—live in Milwaukee.

Brief History of the Hmong

The Hmong migrated from China into the mountainous areas of Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma in the mid 18th century. From 1960 until 1975 the Hmong helped the American C.I.A. to fight the North Communist Pathet-Lao and North Vietnamese. After the Communists took over Laos, the Hmong fled to Namphong and Nong Khai Refugee Camps, Thailand. After January 1976, many Hmong came to the United States, France, Canada, Australia, and Argentina for economic reasons and better education for their children.

Culture Shock

Coming to America is a nightmare yet a must for many Hmong. The first and most shocking barrier they experience is their inability to communicate in the English language. They cannot read street signs, directions, or go to the store. They cannot understand what people are saying. They see many unfamiliar things such as the food, clothing, housing, transportation, and utensils. Some of them are amazed about the convenience of many things but they cannot ask any questions about how to operate these things. Some Hmong have a great difficulty in finding jobs so they have to depend on public assistance for survival. It takes a long time for the many Hmong to become accustomed to this new culture (Cheng, 1987).

Program Background

The Lao Family Community, Inc. and Milwaukee Area Technical College Based Organization (LAO/MATCCBO) was established in March 1989. LFC/MATCCBO is state-funded outreach program sponsored by MATC at Lao Family Community, Inc. All of the student populations are Hmong, Lao, or Vietnamese. Over 90 percent of the student population at LFC/MATCCBO is Hmong, two-thirds women and one-third men, with an age range from 18 to 65. LFC/MATC has over 90 percent attendance and 80 percent continuation rates. The 20 percent dropout rate is affected by family moves from Milwaukee, health problems, and conflicts with jobs or child rearing (Podeschi, 1990).

This program is the first educational program provided at the Lao Family Community, Inc. I am the original instructor. I organized, planned, created student assessment tests and placed students into different levels, trained and interviewed other part-time instructors, wrote the curriculum, set the educational objectives and goals, provided the administration guidelines and policies, ordered textbooks, and started the classrooms from scratch.

The LFC/MATCCBO was provided at the Lao Family Community, Inc., because it is near the students' residential areas and it is easier for students to commute to school. It is one of the few programs throughout Wisconsin that offers Hmong and Lao adult bilingual education in Basic Skills, ESL, and GED preparation for Southeast Asians.

In the past 10-15 years many Hmong adult students have received ESL and Basic Skills instruction from other non-Hmong bilingual certified teachers but the learning process had shown very little success in school, especially the lower levels. Many Hmong adult learners have been in the United States for five to ten years, but still cannot read and write English and find a job because they never had any formal education in Laos or Thailand. These Hmong adult learners had great difficulty communicating with the non-Hmong speaking instructors in the classroom. Many of them had a great deal of stress in learning at school. Enrollment and attendance for the Hmong students was also very poor. This became one of the main concerns for the Hmong community leaders and the Lao Family Community, Inc. Director in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They and the Associate Dean of the Liberal Arts and Science Department at MATC saw that there was a need for adult bilingual education for the Southeast Asians-especially for the Hmong population in Milwaukee.

Program Design

Provide essential basic education, ESL, Bilingual Education, GED preparation, vocational and academic skills and promote student welfare. These goals facilitate and encourage learning and cultural understanding for students and staff and the community.

Education Goals

1. Teach basic survival skills needed in all subject areas: English, Hmong, math, social awareness, and critical thinking skills.

2. Provide primary and secondary education for individual adult learners.
3. Prepare students for entry into various occupational programs and higher education.
4. Integrate experiences and other skills into learning.
5. Assist students to be self-directed, self-supporting and responsible citizens of this society.

Program Services

LFC/MATCCBO offers courses in 0-8 (Levels I-V) adult basic skills, ESL, Hmong/Lao bilingual education, and GED preparation. We offer reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, listening, speaking, idioms, and mathematics. Social studies and science are given to Levels IV and V. MATC and the state require that we teach two hours of reading and mathematics per week, the rest just one hour per week. We also offer skill courses such as Basic Computer, Driving Education, Health and Nutrition, and Parenting Education. The LFC/MATCCBO has two childcare programs; Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) provides the Even Start childcare and the LFC provides the general childcare programs. The parents attend the classes and the children attend the childcare school programs.

Instructional Model

Most of the beginner levels require more bilingual instructional delivery. The percent of the bilingual instructional delivery will decrease as the levels increase.

Schedule

LFC/MATCCBO operates from 9 a.m. until 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We have five sessions—one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and three in the evening. Some of our students work during the day and attend classes at night.

Faculty/Staff

LFC/MATCCBO has one full-time instructor, three part-time instructors, and two childcare teachers. All four LFC/MATCCBO instructors are certifiable by the Vocational Technical Adult Education (VTAE) in Wisconsin. We are paid directly by MATC, follow its school system, and are covered by its policy. The MPS Even Start teacher is paid by MPS and the other childcare teacher is paid by Lao Family Community Inc.

Staff Development

We have a monthly meeting for each program and quarterly meetings for the LFC/MATCCBO, MPS, and LFC Childcare and Adult Education programs. At the beginning and the end of each term we discuss, share ideas, and evaluate all of our educational programs. We follow MATC and MPS school calendar systems. We develop our own self-contained and departmentalized curricula, goals, objectives, and lesson plans. The curriculum is aimed to meet cultural and educational needs. The educational goals and aims are put together by the students, the community, and the program's instructors. We have a structured curriculum for Levels I–IV, and GED preparation.

Theoretical Educational Framework Operations

Subjects: Offer and teach basic skills, ESL, Hmong bilingual, and GED preparation in math, science, computer, reading and writing.

Motivational Technique: Integrate cultural learning experiences into teaching. Encourage and allow students to set their own pace and goals.

Teaching Strategy: Use various strategies that are workable for adult learners. Two preferred strategies are Deductive Reasoning and LEA.

Activities: Play Bingo game, math game, watch videotapes, read newspaper, conference, ending school-year celebration party

Resources: Textbooks, VCR, TV, overhead projector, camera, videotapes, cassettes, tape, computer, printer.

Learning Process: Teach basic survival education, thinking and problem-solving skills

Assessment: Administer the pre- and post-achievement tests, TABE, BEST, and classroom achievement tests developed by the instructors.

Evaluation: Have student/teacher evaluation and Program evaluation at the end of the year.

Placement and Assessment

The first thing we do for a new student is to have a brief interview to find out the student's educational background. We then give him/her our placement test. This placement test will help us to determine the student's skills and register him/her at the appropriate level. The student must be placed into an appropriate level, then he/she can choose an additional subject areas to study.

Our program is in the process of adding a new level each semester so we have a continuous curriculum. For example, if this term Level III learns fractions, then next term it will learn decimals. Students who have severe academic problems might have to remain in the same level, but the rest of the class can move to the next level. We use pre- and post-achievement tests and the instructors' self-made exams to determine the students passing and failing levels. We have more trust in our teacher-made instruments then in a standardized test because it is more relevant to our students' true performance. Our institutionalized self-made assessment is best administered to *our* student population. It may not be appropriate for other sites. Too often we have to guess our students' true levels and skills when we use the standardized tests. There are many reasons for not entirely trusting the standardized instruments, first of all because they were not designed to assess our students' special needs and skills. Second, they have some cultural and educational biases. And third, they are not reliable tests and are not suitable for our students.

We use the BEST Test for testing our students' English skills and the bilingual TABE Test for mathematics. Sometimes it can get very confusing when we try to combine too many tests for one educational project but we cannot avoid this because the state and federal laws require it. All of these tests are administered by the program instructors and the LFC Educational Coordinators.

Native Language Literacy

Preserving and promoting native language literacy is essential for every individual. The native language will bond the individual to his/her culture and group. It is a necessity to acquire a second language. For example, if one can ride a bicycle, then it is much easier to learn how to ride a motorcycle. If one already masters how to read and write one language, it is much easier to learn other languages. Learning a new language requires one to master his/her own language skills first. It is much easier to teach a student who already knows how to read and write his/her first native language than a student who never been in school and cannot read or write any letters or words.

Based on my experiences, students who had six months training at the resettlement camp or those students who have already mastered their native language in reading and writing can learn faster than those who do not have any educational background. They can assimilate sounds and symbols but those who cannot read and write their primary language cannot produce it.

Native Language Instruction

Classroom survey and discussions support the theory that native language instruction (bilingual methodology of teaching) for lower levels and beginning levels is more productive and causes less learning pressure in school than monolingual instruction. Most students agreed that they learn more in native language instruction. They also receive more respect and recognition from the native language instructors. Some students claim two hours of instruction per day and five days per week is not enough time for them to learn. They need more time. They even write letters to ask the state to increase the number of hours of instruction per week. This proves that they prefer native language instruction and it is the most appropriate instruction for them. One of the most important motivations for native language instruction is that students and teachers can communicate better and thus create an inviting learning environment in the classroom. I see many Hmong mothers who carry babies on their back during class time because they don't want to miss the class and they are afraid of falling behind their classmates. They rarely skip school; if they do, I always remind them to give me a call.

We recruit our new students and contact our old students mostly by telephone and when we meet them in the community. We sometimes announce on the Hmong local radio station FM .97.

Some Disadvantages of Native Language Literacy Instruction

Some dislike native language instruction because students speak too much of their native language in the classroom and gain little English. Students can read and write fluently in English but have poor conversation or speaking and social skills. The reason is that they are too shy to speak English in front of others. Some prefer to speak mostly in their native language even when they can say what they want in English because they are not accustomed to the English language. Encouragement for group participation, discussion, and talking in English is difficult for the instructors as well as the students themselves in a native language classroom.

Learning Skills in the Native Language

Learning native language literacy skills can help adult students to obtain a driver license, pass the U.S. Citizenship Test, get the GED Diploma or an Electronic Assembly Line or Machine Tools Machine Shop Training Certificate, and finally, help them to get a decent and affordable job to feed their families and sent their children to colleges. There are several other occupational programs that they can enroll in MATC without a high school diploma but must have some fluency or language skills in their native language and/or English.

Learning through Poems

In our native language curriculum we use Hmong bilingual poems because they can motivate students to learn how to read Hmong and English at the same time and same pace. It is much easier to understand the English words when we teach something from the students' culture because they already know what the passage means so they just focus on the English translation parts. It is a pride and a joy to see a student smile and say, "Oh! this is what and how they say it in English. Now I think I will get it."

A Successful Hmong Adult Student's Story

Cher Ya Yang is a 52-year-old Hmong adult male student attending the LFC/MATCCBO program. He came to the United States on September 30, 1979 without any English or Hmong reading and writing skills. This is his autobiography. The story is typed by him using the wordprocessor in the AppleWorks computer program. I have noticed that they have made more grammatical and spelling errors on the computer (typing) than their original papers. For most of my students, this represents the first time they type a paper and use the wordprocessor and the computer.

> I am Cher Ya Yang. I am 52 years old. My Wife's name is Ying Xiong. She is 51 years old. I have 6 sons and 5 daughters. My sons names are Cha, Chou Neng Fue, Chao, Nou A, and Eliya Yang. Cha and Cha Neng Wered deod In Laos and Nong Khai Thailand. My Daughters are Mai, Chow, Mai See, Bee, and Vang Yang. All of My sons Live in Milwuakee. They are not marry yet. My olde,t son is 21 year old and My Youngest son is 3 years old. Three of My daughters are married. the oldest daughter lives in St.paul, Mennesota, the middle daueghter lives in Fresno, Cali.for nie, nia and the third one lives in geeen bay. the two ymnger daeg hters are not married yet. they they are in the middie school my oldest son is atterding Matc. Chao, my seeonsd son is going to Oakreek Middle School. the other two sons are atterding head start school at is 22 nd Street and West Mitchell Street , my wife is baby sihing at home, she enjoys cooking and readang the bible at home, I also enjoy readang the bible and find ing out about our Hmong's lives in the past to the presert. I was a farmerand a sddierin laos . I worked as a police soldler in Tia Koua Nyou. Xieng Khouang. Laos. I

> guar ded colonnel chao yang is house and proteeted his family during the peaeeful time the Iwent to war wlen there was a war . I raised ohrekens. plgs, cew,water buffaloes horses.ducks. and dags in the farm. I came to U.S.A. on September 30, 1979. I first came to Tennesee, Neshville, and to Dixon, Illinois in 1980.

Activities

LFC/MATC has a traditional "Ending School Year-Celebration." We traditionally celebrate it in June of every year. We have some important guest speakers, presenters, skits and plays, cultural entertainment, recognition and diploma awards and a big dinner. These activities are financed, planned, and organized by the LFC/MATCCBO students and instructors. Other support and resources come from the Lao Family Community, Inc.

We also have Halloween and Christmas parties and field trips. Most of our field trip transportation and arrangement are provided by the MPS Even Start Childcare teacher and coordinator. We usually have a field trip every month. Our students and children enjoy visiting the Milwaukee County Zoo, Milwaukee Public Museum, General Mitchell Airport, Children's Farm, Children's Animal Zoo, Milwaukee Public Library, and the Children's Museum, etc. Our largest field trip to the Milwaukee County Zoo this Spring included twenty-four participants.

Public and Community Relations

We have on-going relationships with many community business and institutions, including: The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, The Milwaukee Journal, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Extension, The Key Newspaper, WTMJ TV, Lao Family Community, Inc., Milwaukee Public Schools, and other community based organization sites. Milwaukee Area Technical College is our main funding source and administrator of our academic services. Lao Family Community, Inc. is the umbrella agency that provides the facility in which LFC/MATCCBO operates, as well as numerous support services available to qualified students.

Some Fears About the Programs

Retention: Since this is an adult education setting, the law doesn't require anyone to attend school. We cannot make them come to school. The AFDC students are the only group required by the Job Services Department and the state to attend school. Most of these adult students are voluntarily coming to school and hope that they will learn how to read, write, and solve math problems. Some may want to learn how to drive a car. Others may want to improve their basic skills. We might have about four categories of students in a class. For example, 1) the self-motivated or volunteer students, 2) AFDC students, 3) job or training preparation students, and 4) GED or other academic preparation students.

Transferring: After students reach the 4.0 grade level as determine by the TABE Test, we then refer them to MATC for job training, higher education, and other advanced studies. It seems that we only provide basic education to help them to reach a certain point and then another institution takes over, so we cannot follow up on the students' success. It looks as if we do the job but we don't know the success.

Instructional Support: We always feel that we don't have enough resources such as computers, library services, and media to offer to our off-campus or CBO students. We fear that they will underachieve because they lack these necessary facilities.

Grant: Our Basic Skills and Adult Basic Education depends on the enrollment number so we fear that in the long run when we have trained all of our students to reach 4.0 or above, then they will be transferring to other academic institutions. We may be short of students to attend this program, and the grant may or may not continue for this project.

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